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## RESOURCES FOR WORSHIP



# RESOURCES *for* WORSHIP

By

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To  
MARY COLE REID  
IN MEMORIAM



## INTRODUCTION

TWO TRENDS IN CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN THOUGHT ARE SIGNIFICANT and promising. One is the quest for a more vital theology; the other is the search for ways and means of making worship more effective. The first explores the realm of truth in terms of revelation and faith, and seeks to express that truth in cogent and convincing form; the second undertakes to elicit the human response to divine revelation that is involved in an experience of God. These trends supplement each other in giving promise of a more realistic demonstration of faith. Theology should be reverent and inspire worship; worship should be meaningful and conducive to profound reflection. Such cardinal spiritual interests are the focus of thought in these sermonic essays.

When a professor of philosophy speaks of Christian worship, one may usually expect speculative abstractions, metaphysical generalizations, or personal analyses, all couched in textbook language and lecture-room style. But he will not find those here. When Professor Reid first served as chaplain in the summer school at Harvard a few years ago, he found it necessary to compress each address into five minutes. The sustained attendance of larger numbers than usual bore testimony to the value of his ministry, and the subsequent publication of those brief addresses in a book entitled *Invitation to Worship* extended the range of that ministry. A second chaplaincy in the summer school at Harvard recently followed, and the addresses delivered in the Harvard College Chapel and the Memorial Church, together

with others presented at Wake Forest College, appear in this volume.

To those who have studied with Professor Reid during the twenty-five years that he has taught at Wake Forest, as well as to those who have read the first series of addresses, no word of commendation concerning the second volume is needed. They will be awaiting it with joyous expectation. To others it is enough to suggest that the flavor of the book be tasted by reading two or three of the short chapters.

These brief addresses are the distilled essence of devout Bible study. They treat basic themes in clear perspective and with discriminating insight. The language is simple, and the style is pleasing and direct. The book stimulates the mind, warms the heart, and creates an atmosphere of reverence and obedience. It is a lesson in action, for it shows how truth can be phrased in the language of worship. Ministers who read it will be disposed to make their church services more worshipful. It will enrich their lives and send them back to the Bible with renewed zeal for study and testimony. The book will show them what good use can be made of a few minutes in a well-planned service. It will also bring to preachers and laymen the blessing of a quiet experience with God. Because each message is an interpretation of a passage of Scripture—which is printed at the opening of the chapter—the book will prove valuable in private use and in public devotional services.

HAROLD W. TRIBBLE



## CONTENTS

1. A Prayer for Beauty . . . . .	11
2. The Need for Worship . . . . .	13
3. Conditions of Prayer . . . . .	18
4. Gaining Divine Help . . . . .	21
5. Place and Privilege . . . . .	24
6. Regal Companionship . . . . .	26
7. Christ's Standard . . . . .	28
8. The Father's Love . . . . .	31
9. Personal Obligation . . . . .	33
10. Kingly Responsibility . . . . .	36
11. Choice . . . . .	38
12. The Great Physician's Character . . . . .	40
13. The Great Physician's Diagnostic Skill . . . . .	42
14. The Great Physician's Treatment . . . . .	45
15. Faith . . . . .	49
16. Divine Power . . . . .	52
17. Divine Precepts . . . . .	55
18. Foundations . . . . .	58
19. The Foundation of Righteousness . . . . .	60
20. Christian Resolution . . . . .	63
21. Moral Fiber . . . . .	66
22. Human Confusion . . . . .	69
23. Immaturity and Obscurity . . . . .	71
24. Folly and Retribution . . . . .	74
25. Judgments and Judgment . . . . .	76

## *RESOURCES FOR WORSHIP*

26. Stupidity and Condemnation . . . . .	80
27. Closed Doors . . . . .	83
28. One Talent and Justice . . . . .	87
29. Temptation . . . . .	90
30. Distances . . . . .	94
31. Results of Worship . . . . .	97
32. Have Dominion . . . . .	100
33. Seed and Harvest . . . . .	103
34. Crisis and Greatness . . . . .	107
35. Conflict and Harmony . . . . .	110
36. Gratitude and Ingratitude . . . . .	114
37. Mission and Strategy . . . . .	117
38. Religion and Common Sense . . . . .	120
39. Truth and Freedom . . . . .	122
40. The Candle . . . . .	125
41. The Spirit of Truth . . . . .	127
42. Jesus and Intelligence . . . . .	129
43. Jesus and Courage . . . . .	133
44. Jesus and Humility . . . . .	136
45. Jesus and Righteousness . . . . .	139
46. Power and the Gospel . . . . .	141
47. The Cross and a Divine Mission . . . . .	143
48. The Cross and Integrity . . . . .	146
49. The Cross and Love . . . . .	149
50. The Cross and Triumph . . . . .	152

# 1

## *A Prayer for Beauty*

Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children.

And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.

—Psalm 90:16-17

THE PSALMIST OFTEN CONTEMPLATES THE MAJESTY OF THE EVERLASTING God and the marvels of his universe. He regards the human soul as an earthly sanctuary of the living God, and feels that such a spiritual temple requires perfect adornment. With poetic intuition he therefore prays that "the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us."

This comprehensive prayer is a plea for appreciation of the grandeur of God's realm of nature. It embraces towering mountain, restless sea, glowing sun, and jewel-sprinkled night. It covers the smallest unit of energy, stellar bastions, space, time, and law. It includes the graceful lily and the giant oak, the modest amoeba and dominion-making man.

The sweeping petition also states man's yearning for achievement. Knowledge illumines the natural universe and clothes it with the vesture of reason. Culture provides the wealth of art,

architecture, literature, music, philosophy, and other treasures taken by the hand of genius from Jehovah's house of wealth. Wisdom is the apprehension of the foundations of scientific fact, the relations of logic, the prevalence of moral law, the essence of personal dignity, and the existence of God.

The psalmist prays especially for awareness of the unutterable beauty of the Lord himself. Transient natural grandeur and passing intellectual achievement are not sufficient for the adornment of the holy of holies of the soul. Perceptual beauty is but a symbol of God's book of nature; rational beauty is merely a reflection of God's universal statutes; aesthetic beauty is only the reflected glow of God's realm of harmony. But spiritual beauty is essentially enlightened and applied faith in the reality, the majesty, and the goodness of God. It effects an excellence of the soul that transforms one's outer self. God is a Spirit, and the incomparable spiritual jewels—mercy, justice, compassion, love—are the proper ornaments of the soul.

Seek knowledge, therefore, in many ways and places. Enter the sanctuary and pray that the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us.

## 2

### *The Need for Worship*

Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech:

And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished:

But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which veil is done away in Christ.

But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart.

Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.

Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

—II Corinthians 3:12-18

DIVINE WORSHIP IS AN EXPERIENCE OF THE HUMAN SOUL WITH THE eternal God. As Willard L. Sperry says, it is "the adoration of God, the ascription of supreme worth to God, and the manifestation of reverence in the presence of God."

In adversity a person needs support. He experiences disappointment, failure, grief, illness, and death. He observes the clash of ideologies, the social discrimination, the devices of bureaucrats, the menace of tyrants, the conflicts that maim or destroy countless millions of human lives. The struggle for shelter, food, health, and freedom often seems hopeless. Reflection upon the immensity of time and space and the universality of death at times provokes a sense of futility. So heavily do such considerations weigh upon a person that unless spiritual experience sustains him, he is disposed to say with Omar:

The Worldly Hope men set their Hearts upon  
Turns Ashes—or it prospers; and anon,  
Like Snow upon the Desert's dusty Face,  
Lighting a little hour or two—is gone.

But man often withstands adversity better than he does success. Achievement in the fields of nature, industry, and government may develop in him the prideful assumption that he is the complete master of his fate. Such self-deification causes a person or a nation to lose sight of God as the author and conservator of all permanent values, and such spiritual blindness leads to confusion and destruction. If a person relies upon sensory facts and temporal values only, he is lost; for wrong objects of devotion produce malformation of character and cause evil motives and practices. Dual standards, fanaticism, criminality, dogmatism, intolerance, and psychoses are fruits of misdirected devotions. Self-enchantment is perhaps the most prevalent form of idolatry;

conceit is the core of sin. Material and political success in business, government, education, or religion fosters paganism. Whether the object of perverted worship is a golden calf, money, science, a man, oneself, the state, or the church, the fruit is evil.

Divine worship is necessary because it provides wise direction. Superior character is formed through worship. A person tends to become like that which he adores, loves, and worships. Interest is an architect of the mind; devotion is an artist of personality; and love is an alchemy of the spirit. As a great affection converted Elizabeth Barrett Browning from illness to health, so a magnificent obsession derived from an experience with God directs a person from small interests to great devotions and transforms him from moral weakness to spiritual strength. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding."

Worship is needed because it re-creates character. The only cure for the personality defect caused by misdirected devotion is the worship of the highest. It is genuine appreciation of the permanent, the good, the beautiful, and the true that enables a person or a nation to discard the false and to rise from the mediocre to the superior. Isaiah knew this truth, for, surcharged with spiritual insight, he wrote:

Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. . . . They that wait upon the Lord shall renew

their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

Jesus Christ is our unique and proper object of worship. John knew the supremacy of the Christ when he said: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." The author of Second Corinthians knew the transforming power of the Christ, for he wrote that "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image . . . as by the Spirit of the Lord." Throughout his ministry people of every condition of life felt the impact of Jesus Christ's divine character. A Gadarene demoniac ran to him and was restored to his home and friends. An erring woman bathed his feet with tears and went away filled with hope and joy. A bereaved family witnessed his power, and happiness replaced grief. An impetuous man talked with him and then affirmed, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." A disciple who was enshrouded with doubt experienced the living Christ and exclaimed, "My Lord and my God." A converted Pharisee who had been recreated by Christ said: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

Worship of Jesus Christ also reveals the solution of the problem of death and immortality, for it enables one to experience the living truth, the master of death. Paul plainly says: "And if



Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. . . . If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept."

The only person worthy of worship, and the only truth worth living for or dying for, is Jesus Christ.

### 3

## *Conditions of Prayer*

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

—John 14:12-14

WE CHERISH ASSOCIATION WITH FRIENDS; WE SEEK THE COUNSEL OF authorities in various areas of human interest. But our Lord shows that, above all human contacts, prayer is a person's supreme relationship.

He reveals that prayer is essentially communion with God. God is a Spirit, and prayer, therefore, is an ineffable experience of the human soul with the transcendent-immanent, eternal Spirit. Prayer thus excels any form of purely human relationship, for it enables one to feel the presence of the Creator of the universe and to receive his mercy and grace and power. Jesus knew the nature and the need of prayer. He prayed when he confronted great responsibility, in the presence of anxiety and grief, and during personal agony. He taught his disciples to pray, and he him-

self prayed for friends who loved him—and for enemies who mocked and killed him.

This superlative relationship entails tremendous personal responsibility. We are not indifferent about important conferences with high officials, an appearance before a tribunal of justice, visits in homes, or our duties to our friends. Just so, we cannot disregard the canons of communion with God. There consequently rests with us the grave responsibility of preparing ourselves to approach him, hear him, and understand him. Jesus plainly showed, for example, the necessity of reverence, humility, contriteness, a genuine sense of need, and purity of motive. Our Lord could not reveal himself to the arrogant, self-righteous, and self-sufficient; and he affirmed that some people make it impossible for God to bless them. But Jesus never failed to respond to the plea of a humble taxgatherer, a faithful centurion, a bereaved widow, a distressed mother, a blind beggar, a desolate leper, or a devout scholar.

Prayer also requires the will to action. It demands that, to the extent of a person's ability, he do his best to think and act in conformity to God's will. When one prays, "Thy will be done," he must himself do something about establishing God's will in his own life and among men. The Spirit of truth does not tolerate indifferent loafers, willful beggars, chronic and empty sentimentalists, unethical petitions for comfortable berths, selfish desires, and the prostitution of ability. A person has a right to pray for his community, his home, and his church when he does what he can for them. He can pray for wisdom and guidance when he strives to grow intellectually and live righteously. He can invoke divine blessing upon the sick, the destitute, and the

confused when he positively tries to help such unfortunate individuals. He can reasonably ask forgiveness, justice, mercy, grace, and love when he endeavors to practice those virtues. Our Saviour was faultless in his ideals and his work, and the Father heard his prayers.

## 4

### *Gaining Divine Help*

And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die.

And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant.

And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this:

For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.

Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof:

Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.

For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that fol-

lowed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.

—Luke 7:2-10

OUR GREATEST NEED IS DIVINE HELP. SPIRITUAL RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE to us, however, only to the extent that we become worthy of them. The Roman centurion expressed three characteristics of a sound personal integrity which enabled Jesus to help him.

First, the centurion was unselfish. Our Master, who knew God intimately and did his will constantly, made it plain that if a person's life is to conform to spiritual law, he must lose his life in devotion to truth and righteousness. The centurion loved the people with whom he lived; he earned their respect and affection; he built them a house of worship and otherwise did what he could for them. Jesus, himself the paragon of unselfishness, therefore freely responded to an appeal made by a man dominated by kindness.

Second, the centurion was humble. He was, of course, a firm and courageous Roman officer; but he was not warped by enslaving vanity, blinding arrogance, or putrefying self-righteousness. He was gravely concerned about a servant who was ill; he turned to Jews for help, refusing to exercise the prestige of Roman citizenship or the authority of military rank. He felt himself unqualified to approach Jesus, and said that his home was unworthy of the Master's presence. Humility is characteristic of a great man, and our Lord, who himself was humble, deeply appreciated that virtue.

Finally, the centurion possessed a superior sense of values. He knew the sacredness of a human life; he was distressed about human suffering; and he recognized the superlative character, the divine graciousness, and the boundless curative resources of Jesus. He therefore sought the Master and asked him for help. And our Lord naturally granted the good man's noble request.

## 5

### *Place and Privilege*

Then I came to them of the captivity at Telabib, that dwelt by the river of Chebar, and I sat where they sat, and remained there astonished among them seven days.

And it came to pass at the end of seven days, that the word of the Lord came unto me, saying,

Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.

—Ezekiel 3:15-17

ONE HEARS THE QUESTION, "HOW CAN I KNOW GOD'S WILL FOR ME?" It is a sane and major inquiry. Ezekiel reveals a means of discovering God's will, for he reports what he himself did and what he experienced.

First, Ezekiel sat where the people sat. In the midst of his captive friends he observed broken hearts, physical suffering, and abuses inflicted by merciless taskmasters. He discovered disloyalty, idolatry, and wickedness; but he also heard prayers for deliverance, expressions of hope of return to Jerusalem, and utterances of devotion to the God of their fathers. When any thoughtful person sees people as they actually live, he likewise finds wealth and poverty, culture and ignorance, health and ill-



ness, sanity and derangement, freedom and bondage, hope and despair.

Second, Ezekiel was astonished. The fruits of tragedy and calamity shocked him. His very soul was shaken by the lethargy, disloyalty, and evil that he saw; but he was also thrilled by the love, faithfulness, and reverence that he discovered.

We are amazed by depravity, selfishness, and moral corruption existing in places high and low. We are also astonished by the excellence of character we observe, often in utterly unsuspected places. There are, for example, students who pursue their work under incredible circumstances. There are, too, the sacrificial labor of parents, the patience and compassion of those who minister to the ill and the afflicted, personal effacement in loyalty to other people, and sacrifice of life in devotion to a friend or a cause.

Ezekiel sat where people sat; he was amazed; and then God spoke to him. Sensitized by people as he found them, Ezekiel felt the presence of God, heard God's call to service, and became a prophet. Spiritual truth is not discovered in a vacuum. It is under the conditions of clear observation and deep sympathy that the divine in man is touched by the eternal Spirit. For God speaks to men in the midst of their realistic and enlightened appreciation of human worth, human suffering, and human need. Whether it is to a General Booth, a David Livingstone, or a Jane Addams, the divine call comes—to each person in his own way—when a person really knows the needs and nature of people.

## 6

### *Regal Companionship*

And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them.

And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them.

And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus.

And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

For he wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid.

And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.

—Mark 9:2-7

ONE DAY OUR LORD TOOK THREE YOUNG MEN ON A JOURNEY, IN THE course of which they had superlative experiences. The journey offered unusual rewards but required much personal effort. Jesus led the disciples up a high mountain. Whether one climbs the exacting peaks of professional skill, the rugged slopes of

scholarship, the commanding heights of statesmanship, or the luminous eminences of saintliness, the ascent is difficult and requires exertion. No such lofty summit is reached without the use of strength, initiative, persistence, and hard labor. Our Lord led these men—as he would lead any person—up the steep incline to the snow-covered crest, where the oxygen of social approval was thin but where the spiritual view was large.

When they had attained the summit, the disciples observed celestial grandeur. They witnessed the ineffable transfiguration of our Master as he communed intimately with God. They saw Moses, the peerless statesman, and Elijah, the majestic prophet, as spiritual leaders in timeless relation with God. The disciples, moreover, heard the voice of the eternal Father giving the superb proclamation and matchless command: "This is my beloved Son; hear him."

Finally, Jesus revealed to these men their superior personal responsibility. Willful disregard of responsibility is lethal selfishness, and voluntary complacency is a cardinal evil. For it is a function of intelligence to penetrate and to illuminate the dark recesses of ignorance; it is the province of wisdom to relieve human need; it is the privilege of spiritual strength to minister to human frailty. When, therefore, the disciples desired to remain at the place of ecstasy, Jesus immediately led them down to the foot of the mountain, where they found a thoughtless crowd, human affliction, mental anguish, and impotent leadership. And there our Lord's first act was, characteristically, one of ministry to human need.

## *Christ's Standard*

Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

—Matthew 5:43-48

A PERSON'S IDEALS MOLD AND REVEAL HIS CHARACTER, DIRECT HIS efforts, determine his usefulness, and inspire his self-respect. Our Lord set the highest of standards, for he said: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

This standard requires hospitality to the truth. Ignorance is the inability to recognize facts and values. Evil is failure to con-

form to spiritual verities. Stupidity is refusal to appreciate worth. Wickedness is willful rejection of the highest perceived values. Christ permits no compromise with ignorance, evil, stupidity, wickedness, or any other source of weakness. He demands of every person the best of which that person is capable—in mental development, ethical devotions, spiritual insights, and honorable motives.

Christ's standard embraces realistic observation. Jesus knew life intimately. He experienced the serious responsibilities of the home of a widowed mother and orphan children. His people suffered the iron heel of the foreign oppressor and the burden of local despots. He saw families haunted with poverty, tortured by affliction, and saddened by death. He met scholarship and illiteracy, humility and arrogance, love and hate, spiritual beauty and moral hideousness, saving faith and malignant skepticism. Jesus sought no ivory tower, and today he offers no escapism from a realistic world.

Christ also expects the maximum of fine achievement. He wants our work to be of the highest quality. He requires undivided devotion to the real and the primary, for he sets reality above appearance, the permanent above the temporary, principle above expediency, love above comfort, mind above matter, and truth above opinion.

Finally, our Lord's standard promotes valid self-respect. Jesus constantly taught the worth and dignity of man. As evidence of his knowledge of human worth, our Lord talked with Nicodemus, who possessed all that natural inheritance and cultural environment could bestow; then he went serenely to the poor woman of Samaria, whose reputation was bad and whose back-

ground the Jews despised. He conversed with a rich and respected young ruler, then heard the searching plea of a humble Syro-phenician mother. He ministered in a lovely Bethany home, and gave relief to miserable outcast lepers by the road. He prayed for his disciples during the Last Supper, and he promised salvation to a thief. He revealed God's love for a person and showed that a man, by the cultivation of humility, peace, tolerance, love, and reverence, grows into the likeness of God. In Virgil's great drama, in discussion of his ancestry, Aeneas exclaims: "Why speak of mighty Theseus, why of Alcides? . . . I also am descended from Jupiter, the All-Highest." Our blessed Lord would have us know and say: "Why boast of race? why of social heritage? Our lineage is of the eternal God, our Father."

## 8

### *The Father's Love*

And he said, A certain man had two sons:

And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.

And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.

And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

—Luke 15:11-15

INTELLIGENT PERSONS FIND IT IMPOSSIBLE TO ESCAPE STAGGERING questions. For example, in view of what we call time and space, and in face of the vast number of living people and thousands of generations of the human family, is it possible that God has personal concern for every member of each generation? In the story of the two foolish sons of a noble father Jesus answers the question.

One of the sons wasted his resources of money, time, energy, character, and self-respect. He left a good home, deserted his par-

ents, went to the wrong places, associated with bad people, stooped to corrupt practices, and sank to social degeneracy. The other stayed at home, showed consideration for his parent's wishes, did his duty, and was generally respectable.

Then the two young men each experienced a personal crisis. The prodigal recognized his depravity. He saw himself on the level of unclean swine, in grave need, and unworthy of readmission to his father's home. Humiliated and humbled, he penitently sought a servant's place with his father. When the other son learned of his brother's return, he exposed his arrogant, selfish, resentful nature. He proved that his respectability was only a veneer. He had paraded loyalty, efficiency and devotion; but despite outward appearances of decency he was inwardly seething with jealousy, selfishness, vindictiveness, and resentfulness. He was much worse than his brother, for he objected to his father's kindness, had no sense of forgiveness, complained of another's good fortune, and wished to kick one who was down and out.

The father, however, with his heart filled with love and joy, welcomed his wayward son home. He likewise loved his dutiful son and treated him with complete justice and affection. Our Master thus reveals the intelligent, boundless, and persistent love of God for every one of his children. However wayward and however unkind we are, Jesus taught that God the Father loves every one of us with such intensity that he and the very angels of heaven rejoice when we return to him.



## 9

### *Personal Obligation*

Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches.

In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.

For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatever disease he had.

And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.

When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?

The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.

Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.

—John 5:2-8

OUR LORD USED PLAIN WORDS ABOUT ABILITY AND OBLIGATION. FOR example, to the despondent man lying by the pool he said three pertinent things.

First, he said to the prostrate man surrounded by dirt and trash, "Stand up!" Selfish people ignored and abused this man. Physical disability, mental deprivation, and psychopathic resignation weakened him. Our Master never enfeebled people with his sympathy, nor did he substitute self-pity for self-respect. He never condoned slothfulness, approved ignorance, or excused negligence. Jesus regarded a man as a potential son of God, and he urged that a person use his great heritage in effort to remove evil, discover truth, and achieve freedom. Jesus therefore told the man to stand up and rise above the objectionable conditions surrounding him.

Second, Jesus said: "Take up thy bed." The bed represented two things. To this man it was a symbol of weakness. It meant illness, inferiority, injustice, hopelessness, and inaction. The bed was therefore the master of the man, serving to make him a whimpering, complaining, despairing person.

The bed was also a symbol of personal resources. It represented property, thought, time, and labor. A man's available resources are his talents, and a moral universe brings him to judgment about them. The man lay on his bed by the pool—whining, dependent, complaining, negligent of his resources. Jesus told him to pick up his bed, and thus to respect his high estate of personal worth. For the first time in his life the man met someone who believed in him and did not take his estimate of himself as the last word, and he therefore began to believe in himself.

Finally, Jesus told the man to walk. In these days of crisis will we crawl as moral hypochondriacs? When precious liberties are threatened, will we grovel upon threadbare pallets stuffed with despondency? With the healing waters of living truth available

will we resign ourselves to cesspools of ignorance and superstition?

With compassion, divine and firm, our Master said: "Get up and walk; exercise your will; move out from these squalid circumstances; act with intelligent determination worthy of a man." And the poor man—looking upon the magnetic, inspiring, and gracious Master—got up and walked.

# 10

## *Kingly Responsibility*

It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter.

—Proverbs 25:2

THIS PROVERB STAGGERS THE IMAGINATION. IN ONE SENTENCE OF swift-running words the writer proclaims the glory of God's creation and the regal nature of human discovery.

The author says that in the timeless process of creation God established every basic mode of existence. Creation thus embraces all substance, mind, and law. It includes atom and star, alga and redwood, amoeba and man, sensation and reason, fear and understanding. It covers chemical affinity, organic development, and all other essentials of nature. It includes psychological laws and ethical principles. The proverb therefore affirms that the universe is a vast treasure house which attests the creative majesty of its author.

The writer also asserts that it is the honor and privilege of a man to search out treasures concealed in the universe. With courage and insight man discovers that a grain of sand reflects nature's mighty crucible; that strata of rock speak eloquently of time; that celestial nebulae suggest the travail of cosmic evolu-

tion; that fossils are records of the great drama of organic history. He also finds that the structure of coal, the habits of insects, and the migrations of birds are pages of God's book of works. He learns that music and art and kindness and honor are of our Lord's gallery of beauty.

The opportunity to search for such priceless treasures is therefore a royal challenge. Celestial galaxies beckon, and man constructs the Mount Palomar telescope. The atom invites examination, and man builds the cyclotron. Illness brings suffering, and man invades the precincts of those things which cause disease. Creative thought provides halls of learning, founds governments, and formulates codes of justice. Genius creates music, poetry, and art. Likewise great ideas—man's primary achievement—rend the veil of ignorance and permit us a glimpse of the object of wisdom. The discovery and use of faith in transcendent-immanent truth will eventually furnish a basis of world brotherhood. The wise, devout, and persistent search for the kingdom of God adds all things to us.

God's matchless treasures are everywhere within and about us. It is our royal privilege to explore and to discover.

# 11

## *Choice*

Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord.

And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

—Joshua 24:14-15

THE PRIVILEGE OF CHOICE IS A CARDINAL ENDOWMENT. IT IS ALSO an inescapable, imperative, and exacting process. The eloquent Joshua suggests three conditions.

First, choice must be made. The very nature of one's body, mind, and environment demands choice. The human organism requires selection of food, clothing, and shelter. The growth of the mind involves attraction and discrimination. Social adjustment entails selection and evaluation. Ethical appreciation presumes wise discernment. We must choose, this day and every day.

Moreover, selection becomes habitual, and thus choice determines one's master. Habits are acquired through choice, and

likewise perceptions become established, interests fixed, motives shaped, ideals developed, and character molded. Often a single decision produces serious results. As Virgil states, to descend is easy, but to reascend is difficult. A foolish choice can handicap the body, distort the mind, and warp the soul; while a wise decision promotes health, culture, and intelligence. An Esau, a Judas Iscariot, a Benedict Arnold, a Quisling takes the fatal step into indelible shame; conversely an Abraham, a Joshua, a John Harvard, a Schweitzer makes the decision that exalts him into immortality. A person's choices, therefore, forge bonds of slavery or open the doors of freedom.

Finally, because of its importance, choice must be made wisely. Joshua affirmed that whatever others did, he and his house would serve God. Socrates chose death rather than stoop to evil, and thus walked into immortality. Roger Williams chose freedom to think and to worship rather than the slavery of conformity to personal comfort, and became a pioneer of religious liberty. Robert E. Lee decided to teach young men in a small, poverty-stricken college rather than sell his good name for much gold, and became a model for the succeeding ages of cultured gentlemen. Above all others Jesus decided to commit himself unreservedly to do the will of God through persistent ministry to human need. He accepted full responsibility for his choice and set his face steadfastly toward the Cross. Our Lord is therefore the perfect example of personal nobility and genuine greatness. He was, as John says, "full of grace and truth."

## 12

### *The Great Physician's Character*

And he came down with them, and stood in the plain, and the company of his disciples, and a great multitude of people out of all Judæa and Jerusalem, and from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases;

And they that were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed.

And the whole multitude sought to touch him: for there went virtue out of him, and healed them all.

—Luke 6:17-19

JESUS CHRIST IS THE GREAT PHYSICIAN. THE PRESENT DANGEROUS attack upon the body of civilization and the existing serious complications demand him as physician. Now when we choose a physician, we want to know who he is and what he is.

Our Master's superb character is one evidence of his greatness and dependability. Jesus was born into a home of royal lineage and of superlative spiritual interests. His physical strength was adequate; his mental ability was superior; his training was excellent; his character was faultless. He learned to work; he knew the value of work, and he loved to work. He was mentally alert, for he observed every condition of life about him. He was intel-



lectually honest, for he never ignored a problem, evaded an issue, or compromised a decision. His wisdom was peerless, and his insights and judgments were perfect.

Jesus' character is further revealed by his boundless sympathy. He felt deep compassion for every needy person. Like a true physician, he never discriminated against a less respected person by reserving his time and energy for more prominent citizens. He ministered with complete impartiality to people of every social, economic, and intellectual level; and he never permitted a selfish motive to affect his attitude toward any person who came to him for relief. Whether his dealings were with a lovely hostess at Bethany, an ignorant woman at a well, an untouchable leper calling from a distance, or a blind beggar by the road, he devoted whatever time and skill seemed necessary to any person who sought his help.

Furthermore, as an evidence of his dynamic personality, Jesus possessed an overflowing, compelling love. Our Master's love was no mere sentiment; it was no transient emotionalism. It was a concrete love for a blind man, a sick woman, an afflicted child, a bereaved widow. He loved the young man who sorrowfully turned away, the disciple who profanely denied knowing him, the thief on a cross, the city of Jerusalem. His love was so unblemished that even in the face of mockery and suffering he expressed no unkindness, remembered his mother, prayed for the murderous mob, and died like a God. Our Master loved God and persons so completely that he literally lost his life in fighting human error and in ministering to human need.

## 13

### *The Great Physician's Diagnostic Skill*

And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me.

And he left all, rose up, and followed him.

And Levi made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them.

But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?

And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick.

—Luke 5:27-31

ACCURATE DIAGNOSIS IS A PREREQUISITE TO INTELLIGENT TREATMENT. Unless a physician first ascertains the nature of an illness, the treatment may be worthless or harmful. A great doctor first discovers the seat of an organic malady and then, if necessary, wisely prescribes surgery or medication.

Jesus was an infallible diagnostician of human conditions. He knew people. Somewhat like a wise old family physician and a brilliant specialist combined, Jesus was so sensitive to physical,

mental, and ethical abnormalities that he never failed to detect them and never made an error in identifying them. As Raymond Calkins suggests, our Master's sensitiveness was like the spiritual counterpart of a stethoscope or an electrocardiograph, which enabled him to detect easily and to diagnose correctly the heartbeat of every person with whom he came in contact.

For example, Jesus met Nicodemus. He appreciated the man's scholarship, leadership, and spiritual hunger; but he also knew that Nicodemus was so restricted by traditional authority and technical facts that he did not understand spiritual reality. He met a model young man who not only knew the Hebrew law but also had kept the letter of the law from his childhood. One who lives such a faultless life would be hard for us to diagnose; but it was not difficult for our Lord to do so, for he understood that a positive human life defies technical regimentation and that goodness does not consist merely of respect for legal codes and rigid observance of social standards. Our Lord was acquainted with a man of wealth. He did not say that the man was evil because he lived in a fine house, wore expensive clothing, and ate good food. But he detected the man's calloused soul and exposed it by showing that he cared less for unfortunate people than did the very dogs at his gate that licked a beggar's sores.

In his examination Jesus went to the focus of infection. He never mistook symptoms for the disease itself. He never let an outward display obscure an inner motive. He knew the type of people who substitute shallow emotionalism for deep conviction, and he saw them wilt in the severe heat of the noonday sun. He saw the pompous Pharisees, who so adorned themselves and paraded their religion that they were held in awe. But their

pomp and dignity never fooled Jesus; he told them that they were "whited sepulchers . . . full of dead men's bones, and all uncleanness." In sharp contrast, however, he understood the benevolent heart of the humble woman who cast her small coins into the treasury, and he made an immortal eulogy of her unaffected generosity. He recognized the kindness of the humble centurion, and he spoke in superlative praise of John the Baptist.

Finally, in his diagnosis our Lord did what physicians and preachers are now beginning to do; that is, he took into consideration the whole person and all the factors contributing to his condition. He recognized the interaction of body and mind and spirit. He knew, for example, how hunger affects personality. He saw how diseases harm the body and injure the mind. He was aware of the pernicious evils resulting from improper education, and he saw how false ideologies degrade persons, institutions, and nations. He knew how selfishness, prejudices, social inequities, economic problems, political evils, and ironclad social codes produce base attitudes and shape criminal tendencies. He realized how morbid fears weaken the body, injure the mind, and chain the soul. Our Lord anticipated, in principle, every worthy accomplishment of medical science, sociology, government, and education.

## 14

### *The Great Physician's Treatment*

And the scribes and Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal on the sabbath day; that they might find an accusation against him.

But he knew their thoughts, and said to the man which had the withered hand, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth.

Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing; Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it?

And looking round about upon them all, he said unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so: and his hand was restored whole as the other.

—Luke 6:7-10

HIMSELF A PHYSICIAN, LUKE FILLED MANY PAGES OF HIS BOOK WITH reports of our Master's treatment of numerous types of human infirmity. How did Jesus treat his patients?

Above all our Lord insisted upon a clean operation. He wasted no time in doctoring symptoms, nor did he presume to remove an infection by the use of a charming bedside manner. He never tried to cure moral anemia with soothing platitudes, nor did he endeavor to remove evil by the use of flattery. He never con-

doned evil, and he did not treat sin with applications of hackneyed praise. If the malady was some dangerous habit or base attitude, Jesus said, "Get rid of it." In caustic hyperbole he cried out: "If your hand offends you, cut it off; if your eye is evil, pluck it out." If the disease was greed, he used the purge of righteous indignation. If the trouble was a dual standard of life, he said: "You cannot serve two masters." If the infection was religious hypocrisy, with justifiable determination he applied the surgeon's lancet—and he administered no anesthetic for his moral surgery. Whatever the trouble, the Master prescribed complete removal of the evil virus or the baleful malignancy.

Jesus inspired confidence. The attitude of the patient toward himself and those who treat him is very important. We understand the fine role a great doctor and a good nurse play. It is said that Sir William Osler's very presence in the sickroom effected miracles, and some of us have observed that there is no finer moral therapy in a community than the radiant personality of a noble person. In this way our Lord's unblemished character, his undiluted sympathy, his perfect serenity, his absolute fearlessness, his unaffected understanding, his failure to show surprise, and his attitude of complete authority commanded respect and inspired hope. The words, "Lord, thou canst make me well," were heard from Nazareth to Calvary.

Jesus required personal initiative. It is, of course, difficult for a physician to treat a sick person successfully unless the patient himself co-operates; therefore, when possible, hospitals arrange for mental patients to undertake some type of occupational therapy. A teacher knows that a student's intellectual growth requires personal effort, and it appears that God himself cannot

help an utterly indifferent person or penetrate a self-satisfied mind. In many cases of serious illness there is a time when the will-to-live becomes determinative.

Except with the helpless, our Lord required a patient to show personal effort and to use his own available resources. The Master never tolerated indifference, condoned laziness, or encouraged a feeling of helplessness. He did not cultivate self-pity, arouse despair, or express an enervating type of sympathy. On the contrary, he told an afflicted man to pick up his bed and walk; he asked the blind man to go wash in the pool of Siloam; he required lepers to go show themselves to the priests; he told the man with the withered hand to stretch forth his hand.

In his curative treatment Jesus furthermore gave the patient a sense of personal worth and endowed life with meaningfulness. Many people are enslaved by a feeling of inferiority or are despondent because of a sense of futility. No preacher who cultivates a feeling of abject depravity by proclaiming that man is a crawling worm in the dust is true to his high calling. No doctor who removes a person's justifiable self-respect is an honor to his profession. No teacher who damages a student's sense of personal worth and ability is fit for the classroom. No administrator who regards his associates as hirelings is worthy of his office. The suppression of a man's respect for his personal worth is utterly unchristian, for Jesus never treated any person as if he were inferior, incapable, or worthless. He rather saw value in people, and he did his best to make them aware of their worth and importance.

Jesus therefore encouraged appreciation of personal excellence. To his disciples he said, "Ye are the salt of the earth; . . . ye are

the light of the world." He taught a taxgatherer and a fisherman that they were capable of ministering to human need, and he sought out a doctor and caused him to bring healing to frustrated souls.

Our Lord also developed high self-respect in people by revealing that a person is the apex of creation, a child of a loving and divine Father, and has a spiritual mission. Our Lord gave man a sense of partnership with God; and, as John said, he revealed that God has endowed us with the power—the unutterably glorious right—of becoming the sons of God.



# 15

## *Faith*

And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God.

For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

—Mark 11:22-23

FAITH DEALS WITH VALUES THAT CANNOT BE ADEQUATELY STATED, hopes that resist logical verification, and absolute truths that defy description. While no man can describe faith, one is able to be aware of its existence, be guided by it, and venture to comment upon it.

Mind works in the field of evidences, but faith touches the unseen realm. Faith permits the movement of the soul in the direction of eternal probability. It is valid conviction of the existence of spiritual verities; and it gives assurance that when a person has done his best, he can safely leave his destiny in the hands of God.

It is a singular fact that so many people who claim to be Christians regard the objects of faith as vague or nonexistent. Never-

theless, from one point of view the resources of spiritual power are not such a great mystery. We can know that there is an immanent-transcendent reservoir of divine power that can be used. Moses learned of it in the desert. Isaiah experienced it in the temple. Saul of Tarsus felt its influence when he saw Stephen die, as he traveled on the road to Damascus, and while he was an apostle of Christ. Huxley was aware of it when he recognized the Eternal. Booth and Bach, Florence Nightingale and Baden-Powell, released its energy through the Salvation Army, the console, the Red Cross, and the Boy Scout movement. Spiritual truth, released as applied good will, made Moses surpass the Pharaohs, Paul excel the Caesars, Francis of Assisi eclipse the medieval popes, Pasteur tower over Napoleon, and the kingdom of Christ become infinitely greater than the Roman Empire. But above all others Jesus knew this source of power and kept his life charged with it.

Our Master had implicit faith in God. He never questioned the existence of God. For Jesus, God was a Father to whom he turned constantly, with whom he moved intimately, and in whom he trusted implicitly.

Jesus also had faith in man. It was through his perfect faith that our Lord found proof of man's immortality, for such proof cannot be had from knowledge of the physical world only. In nature we observe facts and sequence. The acorn grows into the oak; the caterpillar passes through the chrysalis stage and becomes a butterfly; the child grows toward maturity of mind and body; food satisfies organic hunger; tones satisfy the ear; color pleases the eye. Nevertheless, one cannot find in natural phenomena proof of the human soul or an affirmative answer to

the persistent craving of the soul for immortality. But Jesus knew man's spiritual nature. He knew the immortal nature of a person. The infinite value of the human soul was therefore a primary motivation of his ministry. He constantly taught that a person—any person, whatever his status in relation to human standards—is of infinite worth.

Jesus, moreover, had faith in the ultimate triumph of truth. His work was hindered by every conceivable obstacle. His death, resulting from hideous injustice, perpetrated by tradition, ignorance, envy, and hate, seemed to effect complete failure of his mission. But Jesus knew God, and he had confidence. He knew that divine values are imperishable. Our Lord was aware of the fact that he came forth from God, that he ministered in accordance with the will of God, and that his destiny was safe in the hands of God.

# 16

## *Divine Power*

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

—Acts 2:1-4

BEFORE HIS DEATH JESUS PROMISED HIS DISCIPLES THAT THE HOLY Spirit would be sent; that it would be a comfort to them, give them understanding, and enable them to do wonderful things. They likely did not understand what he meant until Pentecost, when memorable events occurred.

The disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit. It is probable that they were in complete sympathy in tragedy, grief, frustration, receptiveness, and humility. It is of no major consequence whether or not the Holy Spirit appeared as a mighty wind and a visible flame. One cannot explain or define satisfactorily those

conditions that are of most significance in experiences of such a nature. What is physical reality? What is life? What is mind? Why does a blade of grass grow? Does one examine a mother's love with a microscope, balances, or a slide rule? Can mercy, compassion, and right be reduced to logical deductions or arrived at by mathematical formulas? The important fact is that the disciples were prepared to receive the Spirit of God and it came upon them. They knew that something happened to them. Perhaps it was the realization that their leader was not merely Jesus the man but Jesus Christ the living truth. Anyway, they recognized their own importance and their great mission under their eternal and ever-present spiritual leader. Such awareness is not unlike a mighty wind and a tongue of flame.

The disciples then became bold and proclaimed the truth. A great idea makes one bold. Men become obsessed even when the idea is a dangerous one, and show fanatical determination in promoting it. Hitler was so enamored of the Nazi concepts that his leadership inspired millions of his countrymen with fanatical zeal. Communism so stirred Lenin that he established a movement of such power that it threatens to engulf the world. In the realm of humanitarian motivations scientists have passionately sought and proclaimed facts; statesmen have formulated Magna Chartas of human rights; philosophers have courageously speculated, and then formulated ideas and taught truths; Christian missionaries, at peril of their health and life, have gone to the ends of the earth. At Pentecost the disciples experienced the force and the purging flame of truth, and they then proclaimed the word of God. To the crowd about them, and wherever they went, they preached Jesus Christ. They knew the imperishable

truth, and they offered no substitute for it. For them the gospel was not theory, tradition, dogma, expediency, numbers, or organization—it was Jesus Christ, Saviour.

The fruits of their work, done under the motivation of the Spirit of God, are imperishable. The products of a person's labor should be tested in the crucible of the living truth. Are the end results of one's efforts temporary and transient only? All material accomplishments will eventually vanish; but those who work with God in establishing spiritual reality have assurance of permanent accomplishments. We know nothing of any buildings, viaducts, highways, or temples constructed by the disciples; but under the direction of the Holy Spirit they built a permanent structure consisting of "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control." And at the present time we know that unless the human family builds civilization of such divine materials, it will become self-destructive.

## *Divine Precepts*

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. . . .

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

—Matthew 6:19-33

JESUS CHRIST IS THE INFALLIBLE SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY. HIS PRECEPTS are statements of principle. For example, the command, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness," includes three imperatives.

Our Lord affirms that a person must seek. Response to need is essential to life, and sane initiative is necessary to human progress. A living organism must employ effort to support itself and to maintain its kind. The human mind develops properly only through persistent voluntary exercise. Culture is promoted by

earnest toil. Wisdom is a product of hard labor. Saintliness is achieved by discipline in doing the will of God. Our Lord, with complete understanding, proclaimed the moral law of personal alertness.

Our Master also asserts that the high purpose of human effort is the search for the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is the domain of truth. Whatever, therefore, a person's field of work, his primary objective must be the discovery of the truth. Anything else is partial, inadequate, restrictive, defeatist, and ultimately dangerous; and any person, any institution, or any state that disregards the truth, or that makes the truth a secondary consideration, violates a spiritual principle and promotes evil. That is why Jesus warned against undue loyalty to rules of conduct as such, and that is why he exposed the evil practices of the men who gave the letter of the law priority over the living truth. Our Lord is the perfect earthly revelation of the truth, for his life was in complete harmony with the will of God.

Finally, our Master requires righteousness. Righteousness is right living, and right living demands that one's ability and opportunities be devoted to interests that promote human life. It includes, for illustration, enlightened and active devotion to justice, honor, honesty, mercy, and love.

Jesus himself is the perfect example of righteousness. He grew in wisdom, until his insights were clear and his judgments perfect. He was the essence of love, and he passionately loved people. He was the embodiment of unselfishness, of courage, of gratitude, of graciousness, of honor, and of every other noble virtue. He



was alert to every condition and opportunity about him, but his primary interest was the kingdom of God. He constantly proclaimed the truth and endeavored to translate the truth into the development of character and human relations; he went about always doing good.

# 18

## *Foundations*

Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the wind blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

—Matthew 7:24-27

JESUS DECLARED THAT A WISE MAN BUILDS HIS HOUSE UPON A FOUNDATION OF ROCK, WHILE A FOOL ERECTS HIS HOUSE UPON SAND.

A rock represents integrity. It is a solid unit formed by the action of intense heat and immense pressure upon enduring materials. Solid human character is thus wrought in the mills of life, where the stress and fire of adversity and responsibility remove the dross of ignorance, slothfulness, cowardice, and selfish-

ness and consolidate the refined substances of wisdom, initiative, courage, and charity.

The rock is also a symbol of permanency. It resists pelting rains, lashing gales, and the slow-grinding mills of time, for it is solid, hard, and massive. It supports enormous weight and withstands vast strain. A great life likewise encounters irritating problems, crushing burdens, and cyclonic evils. It possesses abiding qualities indispensable to righteousness, and it defies death because good is imperishable.

The rock, moreover, typifies universality. It is composed of substances elementary to the physical order; and it is so much a part of the natural realm that its unity, its mass, and its stability depend upon cosmic substances and law. A great life exists in the natural sphere; it is also of the spiritual realm, and consists of spiritual attributes such as justice, love, beauty, and goodness. It conforms to principles emanating even from God himself.

Men, institutions, and nations must build. If they foolishly rely upon the dust of falsehood, the quicksand of sensuousness, the beaches of scientism, and the drifts of national paternalism, that which they build will inevitably fall into ruin and become the lair of some monster. If, however, they build wisely upon the unshakeable truths of a moral universe, the structures they erect will endure safely whatever adversity they may encounter. Our Lord Christ said so; and he knew.

## 19

### *The Foundation of Righteousness*

And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?

And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.

And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?

—Luke 10:25-29

THE STORY OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN SHOWS THAT A SAFE SUPER-structure must rest upon a solid foundation. All particulars of the story and the sequel to it rest upon the two bedrock commandments.

A tragic and representative condition prevailed. Bandits infested the countryside. A victim of assault and robbery lay on the highway. Yet criminals abound no less in our own society. One has only to note statements by J. Edgar Hoover and

others concerning juvenile delinquency and adult depravity to become aware of present conditions of evil, both within the law and outside of the law.

Now abundant helpful resources existed for the wounded man. As he lay by the road, the Levite, a representative of the law, passed by. The Levite was a keen observer, and he possessed intelligence and legal authority. The priest, a representative of the temple, came by. He possessed scholarship, religious reputation, and ecclesiastic authority. The Samaritan, likewise, brought fine resources; for he had oil, wine, skill, a beast of burden, money, and credit.

Today civil law and government, religious leaders and institutions, money, food, clothing, education, and medical science are available. No thoughtful person condemns wealth, skill, physical equipment, or any other useful possession or practical accomplishment; for such may be instruments of righteousness. Some of us wonder, however, what is now actually the value of some types of education, skills, and other such matters to tragic human situations. For, when our resources are so abundant, why are tragedy, confusion, and frustration so prevalent? The twentieth century is as full of tragedy and disaster as it is of safety and success.

Only the Samaritan ministered to the suffering man. Why was it that he alone played the role of neighbor? Jesus made the answer clear. Whether the Samaritan professed anything at all we do not know, and, after all, that is a secondary consideration. What does matter is the fact that he had the unaffected, compelling love which knows no artificial boundary lines. This in itself is a confession of faith—"faith working through love."

While local covenants and international agreements are necessary, and while means of enforcement of law are imperative to a local society and to a world federation, the great problems of human relations will never be solved by rules, resolutions, isms, or any other purely human device. They will be solved when the people of the world love God and love each other with that love which redeems intelligence and gives direction to all of human life.

*Christian Resolution*

And a certain scribe came, and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead.

—Matthew 8:19-22

IN THE TRENCHANT SENTENCE, "FOLLOW ME: AND LET THE DEAD bury their dead," our Lord shows that he expects singleness of purpose and unqualified loyalty. Vital resolutions are therefore essential to the Christian way of life.

A Christian is expected, for example, to be intelligent. The worst source and form of human waste is an undeveloped, misdirected, and dissipated human mind. Ignorance is the parent of all sorts of evils that warp thought, misdirect lives, bring conflict, produce immeasurable suffering. Knowledge, however, is a source of virtue, and wisdom is a means of freedom. But a Christian student must resist the charms of educational sirens

and avoid the dupery of glamorous false premises. Whatever the cost in time and hard labor, he must seek the rigid discipline and pursue the sound culture offered by the great masters of thought.

A Christian must resolve to become wisely independent. Now sane independence must not be confused with silly defiance or moronic license, for the spirit of rebellion and foolish radicalism enslaves many people. Some people think, for instance, that the violation of social codes, the disregard of moral standards, or the denial of spiritual principles gives independence. Other people parade a spurious liberty by exhibiting a flabby tolerance or a myopic dogmatism.

A Christian must wisely exercise his capacity for independence. He must accept the moral imperative to study, to evaluate, and to reflect. He will appreciate worthy human achievements; but he will not substitute tradition, opinion, or human authority for truth, for it is the truth that will make him free.

Finally, the Christian must resolve to become idealistic. A thousand transient, exciting interests tend to stifle a person's idealism and restrict his vision to a realm of temporal affairs and prosaic matters.

While practical matters often are indispensable, a life projected solely upon the practical and utilitarian plane inevitably moves toward disillusionment and despair. A Christian must pierce beyond the illusory veil of temporal interests, or he will abuse the fabric of inspiration and lose the substance of faith. He must achieve faith in the Eternal and in himself as personally akin to the Eternal. A Christian must let his soul feast upon the food



proper to it and attain to what Plato calls a "love of the everlasting good" if he would see life in the divine radiance of

That Light whose smile kindles the Universe,  
That Beauty in which all things work and move,  
That Benediction which the eclipsing Curse  
Of birth can quench not, that sustaining Love  
Which through the web of being blindly wove  
By man and beast and earth and air and sea,  
Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of  
The fire for which all thirst; now beams on me,  
Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.

## 21

### *Moral Fiber*

Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand.

Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein.

Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them.

They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.

—Daniel 5:1-4

CRUCIAL HOURS REQUIRE STRONG MEN. MORAL FIBER IS NURTURED by high ideals, formed by noble resolve, and tested in adversity. The Book of Daniel, with swift and graphic plot, shows the growth and power of a man.

As a youth Daniel resolved that he would not defile him-

self. A captive in Babylon, he was subject to the impacts of defeat, humiliation, and despair. He confronted intimidation by a despot, the moral ebb tide of public opinion, and the pressure of social conformity. Jerusalem was in bondage; the temple was polluted; Israel's God was an apparent failure. In the face of such severe forms of adversity Daniel staunchly refused to adopt practices that would weaken him, desert standards that would wisely guide him, or violate a faith that would sustain him. The king's orders, therefore, did not frighten him; the threat of imminent death did not intimidate him. He used good sense, for he said: "I will not defile myself with the king's meat and wine." He had faith, for he affirmed: "My God is able to save me; but if not, I will not bow myself before an idol."

Daniel was subjected to many acid tests, but he never once failed. For instance, Belshazzar, with a thousand of his lords, was holding a drunken feast. Handwriting appeared on the wall—as, in one way or another, it always does. The king sent for Daniel and commanded him to interpret the writing, promising him a rich reward if he did so. Daniel was not afraid of the king and his thousand cohorts. He did not tremble at the responsibility of announcing the truth, for a prophet of God need fear no despot. Daniel therefore spoke boldly and plainly. He first told Belshazzar that he did not want his gifts. He then told the king that he had refused to learn, and therefore was silly; that he was guilty of drunkenness before his people, and thus had betrayed his high office; that he was arrogant toward God and guilty of irreverence; that he had desecrated the holy vessels

dedicated to God; and that even that very night he had brought his kingdom to ruin and his people to disaster.

Belshazzar and his associates arrogantly substituted license for liberty. adopted practices that were beyond all reason and decency, imposed upon themselves repulsive forms of slavery, and met death disgracefully. Their condition reminds one of Thucydides' report of a situation related to Corcyra: "The seal of good faith was not divine law, but fellowship in crime. . . . Neither faction cared for religion; but any fair pretence which succeeded in effecting some odious purpose was greatly lauded. . . . But the cleverer sort, presuming in their arrogance that they would be aware in time, and disdaining to act when they could think, were taken off their guard and easily destroyed." But Daniel had faith in God; he was mentally alert; he possessed wisdom and courage necessary to correct evaluation and prophetic expression.

Forms of arrogance exist in our country. There is nevertheless much more good than bad in our people; the good needs to be aroused and set into action. Men of solid character whom God can use as prophets to the nation are an imperative need of this hour.

## 22

### *Human Confusion*

And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it,

Saying, if thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.

For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side.

And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

—Luke 19:41-44

MODERN EDUCATION PRODUCES FRUSTRATION. THE PRESENT GOAL OF education is not so much truth and wisdom as it is cash and success. The emphasis is upon material interests, technical facts, and professional expertness—all of which are, of course, highly commendable within their proper sphere. The trouble is that education does not stress spiritual truth and moral discipline; as a result youth is as a ship at sea without rudder, compass, or a view of the polestar. Information is a giant, while wisdom is a

pygmy; and with the instruments of potential destruction at our disposal we are as children playing in a room filled with high explosives. The twentieth century may witness the decline, if not the suicide, of civilization.

Man has lost much of his self-respect. When astronomy reveals the immensity and exactness of the physical universe, man suspects that he is only a trivial particle. Comparative anatomy and comparative psychology arouse the notion that man is only a brute. The discovery of galvanic phenomena associated with thought causes many people to fancy that mind is only an electric by-product of cerebral changes. Such notions give man a dwindling conception of himself, and despite a veneer of boldness he feels that perhaps

The play is the tragedy, "Man,"  
And its Hero the Conqueror Worm.

In addition man has suffered a failure of the nerve of his faith. For many people the soul is a fiction, and God a phantom at their own personal disposal. It is reasonable to say that there can be no sound character without elemental concepts of God and man, but the present generation has been betrayed into discrediting such concepts. And many present institutions of our civilization are, as Mortimer Adler states, like the "walls of an empty house which will collapse under pressure from without because of the vacuum within."

Our Lord Christ calls us today to the enormous task of bringing relief to a world weary and frustrated. No greater challenge can come to us.

## 23

### *Immaturity and Obscurity*

And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?

And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God.

Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother.

And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth.

Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.

And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.

And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!

—Mark 10:17-23

LIFE OFFERS A SERIES OF OPPORTUNITIES AND CHOICES. A PERSON succeeds or fails according to the manner in which he meets

inescapable crises. There are people who possess unusual ability but who fail because of one weakness. The young man who came to Jesus had one fault.

This man had many excellent characteristics. He had enthusiasm, for he came running. He was respectful and reverent, for he knelt before Jesus and called him Master. He was intelligent, for his question was profound. His material resources were large, and his social status was enviable. He also reflected moral cleanliness, because he had kept the law.

Life brings acid tests. Our Master, always wisely observant, applied a severe test. He told the man to sell what he had and give to the poor. Now Jesus never advocated communism or any foolish attitude concerning material possessions; nor did he ever encourage thriftlessness, or approve any person who refused to respect property. He simply told the young man that if he was to have eternal life, he must honestly confront the human situation, lose himself completely in devoted self-abandon, and commit himself unreservedly to the relief of human confusion and perplexity. In effect Jesus said to him: "Follow me. Do what I am doing: clothe the naked in body; feed the poverty-stricken in mind; remove manacles of illness; visit the unfortunate; bring hope to those in despair; and proclaim the goodness of God."

The young man could not endure the test. He lacked one thing—ethical maturity. His moral courage was not adequate to the rigors of high moral responsibility. His ethical vision was so poor that he failed to recognize supreme intangible values. He therefore did not have the faith of Socrates in view of death, the devotion of Paul to people in need of spiritual



guidance, the strong fiber of Jane Addams in her work in the slums, the determination of Florence Nightingale as a nurse in the Crimea, or the courage of Dorothea Dix in her ministry to the mentally ill. He simply lacked the capacity necessary to make a great decision at the crucial moment. So he walked away—into obscurity.

## 24

### *Folly and Retribution*

Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

—Matthew 7:6

A PERSON IS A CITIZEN OF THE MORAL UNIVERSE. HE IS AS SUBJECT to moral principles as he is to natural law. Jesus knew the requirements of the moral order, and he therefore spoke plainly of the nature of folly and its bitter fruit. In one short sentence he stated three facts.

He asserted that a person has priceless treasures. Health, for example, is a source of energy, initiative, and effectiveness of body and mind. Mind is the superlative endowment which provides meaning, evaluation, appreciation, ideas, hope, and freedom. Time gives opportunity for growth, vision, and achievement. A good name is more precious than fine gold, for it is a basis of self-respect, confidence, and friendship. A person's spiritual nature is the source of his faith, the subjective cause of his belief in God, the inspiration of the hope which makes life worth while, and the guarantee of immortality. Our Lord regarded such treasures as holy and sacred.

The Master also knew that a man can subject his great treasures to extreme abuse. He knew men who threw them to swine, which, having no appreciation of real values, trampled them with their dirty, sharp, cloven feet in the sties in which they fed and bred, wallowed and grew fat. Thus organic needs become perverted into intemperance, and good health is lost. Emotion, a source of joy and sympathy and compassion, frequently becomes an ugly, swinish monster. Mental capacity, the fount of culture and progress, often sinks into the mire of vulgar imagination, selfish interests, and evil habits. Very little time and a minimum of effort are needed to lose a good name, destroy a mind, or disgrace a home. Swine trample swiftly and mercilessly.

Jesus realized and proclaimed that folly brings retribution. One cannot violate moral law with impunity. Swinish evil turns upon man and tears him apart. The unclean beast attacks, wounds, and leaves man to suffer. Selfishness suppresses benevolence; arrogance attacks tolerance; materialistic devotions enshroud hope; intemperance wastes resources and locks doors of opportunity; ignorance breeds fears; spiritual impoverishment fosters hopelessness and despair. The severest agonies that man endures are fruits of the waste of his priceless pearls.

## 25

### *Judgments and Judgment*

Judge not, that ye be not judged.

For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and behold, a beam is in thine own eye?

Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

—Matthew 7:1-5

THOUGHT PRODUCES JUDGMENTS. EVALUATION IS A NATURAL AND proper function of the mind. Jesus pointed out, however, that when a person judges, he becomes both a witness and a jurist with reference to himself. That is why Jesus taught the seriousness of human verdicts.

A person's judgments make him a witness in regard to himself. They reflect the quality of his mind, for a man thinks in terms of his mental development. His meanings, evaluations,

and decisions grow out of his experiences, memories, and established habits of thought. His judgments show that his mind is developed or undeveloped; that it is filled with valuable facts and great ideas or cluttered with error and false opinion; that it is cultured and honorable or uncouth and base. It is a truism, therefore, that whenever a person expresses a judgment he reveals something of the condition of his mind. For example, what is his reaction to birds, flowers, trees, and sunsets? What is his opinion of Homer, Sophocles, Euripides, Dante, Shakespeare, Robert Browning? Does he appreciate Michelangelo, da Vinci, Corot, Millet? Does he find joy in the companionship of Socrates, Plato, Kant, Locke, and Spinoza? What is his bearing in the presence of officials in high positions, and what is his attitude toward people of unfortunate circumstances? What claims his attention? What gives him pleasure? What makes him angry? Whether it is his simplest opinion or his choice of companions, the decision is an expression of the person's mind.

A person's judgments also make him a judge of himself. His decisions are verdicts upon his moral nature. They reveal his sense of right and wrong, of fairness and unfairness, of justice and injustice, of benevolence and selfishness. They show his attitude toward work, property, and time. They often indicate prejudice and vindictiveness, or love, mercy, and humility. It is an unpleasant fact that our judgments are so intimately related to our own natures and responsibilities that any adverse verdict we impose upon another person in some measure condemns us. We have no respect for a person who punishes another man for a crime which he himself committed; but under what

circumstances can we justly claim complete freedom from guilt?

Common sense and ethics demand that we ask ourselves searching questions. Am I, directly or indirectly, responsible for some person's failure? Who teaches a child bad manners, poor taste, profane speech, and crude habits? Who leads a youth into immoral interests, intemperance, and crime? Who helps place prison stripes upon men? Who causes a feeling of inferiority and a lack of ambition? Who cultivates prejudice, intolerance, and hate? Who is responsible for the quality of our communities, our educational standards, conditions of our government, the status of our religion? Our indifference toward our responsibility and our attempts to deny our part in shaping human lives are plain verdicts of moral immaturity and ignorance of moral law. Jesus thus spoke clearly about the matter: "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."

Judgments, moreover, set days of judgment. Jesus declared that "with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." The high court of the moral order never recesses. It has full jurisdiction over every part of our lives, and its decrees are inescapable. Correct discernment of facts leads toward accurate meaning; accurate meanings make possible sound reasoning; valid reasoning is essential to wisdom; wisdom is awareness of the truth; knowledge of the truth is a source of freedom; achievement of freedom constitutes human progress. The converse obtains, for stupidity and unwisdom foster error and cause degeneration. People waste or wreck their lives through ignorance, bad decisions, and false steps. A person may or may not

recognize factors that influence him to choose the road leading eastward instead of that leading westward, but his destination is determined in the act of choice. The judgments one makes determine whether he becomes unlearned or cultured, a politician or a statesman, an educational expert or a great educator, a humble servant of his church or a devout and courageous preacher of the gospel of God. Decisions are made; verdicts occur; destiny is established.

Through human judgments made in a moral universe, the judgment of God is pronounced upon every person and every institution.

## 26

### *Stupidity and Condemnation*

The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven.

He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red.

And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?

A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed.

—Matthew 16:1-4

ANY PERSON WHO TRIFLES WITH THE TRUTH IS A FOOL, FOR THE abuse of advantage brings failure. The account of the behavior of the Pharisees toward Jesus is an example of mental perversion, moral imbecility, and impending condemnation.

The men were with Jesus. Association with great persons is an invaluable experience. We seek great men in homes, offices, forums, colleges, and churches; we undertake to know them as they are found in books, science, philosophy, and theology;



and, in faith, we hope to be with them in the place our Father has established for us in heaven. The Pharisees and Sadducees were in the presence of the world's greatest person. As the greatest of teachers, he could have told them of human problems and needs and advised them how to appreciate values, exhibit wise leadership, and lighten the personal and social burdens of their people. Moreover, as the Christ, the son of God, he could have spoken to them of the nature of mercy, justice, love, and the perfect will of God. But these men, however near physically, were so far away in attitude and purpose that they neither saw nor heard the Christ.

The men abused their exceptional advantages. They had information, but they sought no wisdom. They were social leaders, but they did not inquire about ways and means of helping their fellow countrymen. They were religious officials, yet they did not seek divine truth and guidance or express a desire to do the will of God. They discredited wisdom by resorting to cleverness; they violated their obligations of leadership by substituting selfish scheming for the lofty motivation of statesmanship; they profaned their religious position by assuming that God is a showman; they insulted Jesus by requesting him to compromise his divinity.

Jesus condemned their motives, their mental puerility, their circumscribed interests and practices. He knew that they sought spectacular demonstration and seemed to disregard the more commonplace human burdens—illness, mental derangement, social inequity, poverty, criminality—around them. He observed their selfish plots when Israel was in grave need of prophetic guidance and Jerusalem was approaching destruction. He saw

that they placed ceremony above ministry, the letter of the law above truth, technical rules above love, and that true to type they expected God to manifest himself by means of some trick. Jesus therefore called them hypocrites—expert at trivial affairs and negligent of major situations.

The verdict was just. It should have been a warning to those persons in Christian history who arbitrarily dictated creeds and dogmas and obscured the Christ with the fog of opinion and prejudice; to leaders of the Inquisition who decreed mental and physical torture and death; to those who fought science, and thus helped retard civilization and promote conflict between science and religion; to the men who objected to the open Bible, freedom of thought, and the right to worship according to the dictates of conscience. It should have been a warning to the rich and powerful Russian Orthodox Church and to all Protestant and Catholic leaders in Europe and America prior to 1914. Ecclesiastical leaders of our civilization did not observe the "signs of the times" in 1914 or in 1938, and the moral judgment upon them is an awful one. Perhaps a few persons now hear the terrible horsemen—War, Famine, Pestilence, Death—mounting their steeds again.

The record contains this terrible indictment—and warning: "And he left them, and departed."

## 27

### *Closed Doors*

Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:

But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.

Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.

And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.

But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.

Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.

But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

—Matthew 25:1-12

JESUS USED PLAIN STORIES IN TEACHING IMPORTANT LESSONS. HE knew that many people through neglect permit the doors of opportunity to be closed and locked against them, so he used the story of the foolish virgins to portray opportunity, neglect, and tragedy.

The young women had ability, time, and fortunate circumstances. They knew the bridegroom would return, had access to resources essential to their preparation for the celebration, and they naturally hoped to be welcomed at the place of feasting and happiness. Young people rightly expect to make friends, build good homes, gain prestige, and participate in important affairs. They often feel that at the proper time they will find doors of opportunity wide open to them; for, knowing ways in which other people succeeded, they rely upon their family heritage, social status, club membership, and personal charms. Some people expect cleverness, money, or influential friends to furnish them admission to the inner sanctuaries of life. There are those who rely upon luck, assume that sheer will power is sufficient, or depend upon the notion that when occasion requires, they can experience complete reformation of attitude, motives, and habits, and thus be ready for any emergency. It must be said also that numerous religious institutions rest in the twilight of smug optimism, waiting for a benevolent Providence to furnish free admission to success and joy.

The five young women were negligent. They had good lamps,

but failed to equip them with oil. They were indifferent to their need, for they slumbered and slept. For them, drowsiness suggested present comfort; capacity gave a sense of security; time induced postponement. They doubtless were naïve, sentimentally pleasant persons, who had, however, no fine sense of values, no discipline in punctuality, no clear vision, no love of work, and no standard of responsibility. They represent the idlers, the drifters, the butterflies, and the opportunists. Their name is legion; they exist in every community. They may be found in colleges, professions, offices, places of amusement, and elsewhere. They discredit common sense, foresight, and effort, yet they wish to receive the best. They have access to good books, laboratories, art, music, and wonderful personalities; they have ability to examine and study the wisdom of the ages and prepare themselves to occupy places of unusual significance. But they are negligent; they postpone, and slumber and sleep.

The door was shut. When opportunity came, the young ladies were unprepared. They knocked, begged, suffered, wept. They had, in effect, bolted the door against themselves. In telligence cannot be borrowed; character cannot be bought, sold, or given; refusal to learn today forbids understanding tomorrow. The immutable principles of life demand respect; and, to the unprepared, opportunity can only say, "Depart. I know you not." The judgment is firm in regard to wastefulness of life, and the penalty is the misery of outer darkness. Persons locked on the outside of the vast treasure house of culture are denied appreciation of the exact logic of mathematics, the intellectual facilities of languages, and the charm of literature. They cannot see the dramas of Goethe or Shakespeare, nor can they hear the

music of Beethoven or Bach. They do not feel the inspiration to be found in the artistic productions of Phidias, Michelangelo, and Rembrandt. Their inability to comprehend the spiritual wisdom of Isaiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, and Paul is pitiable.

The supreme tragedy is that the door of so many minds and hearts is closed to the living Christ.

## 28

### *One Talent and Justice*

Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed:

And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine.

His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:

Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.

Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents.

For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.

And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

—Matthew 25:24-30

MENTAL, ECONOMIC, AND SOCIAL DIFFERENCES APPEAR IN EVERY area of society. Equality exists only in political theory. The par-

able of the talents shows the unfortunate condition of a person of limited resources, and a word should be said in his behalf.

The man who had one talent was unduly conservative. He believed he was a victim of circumstances, was afraid to venture, and felt no obligation to make productive investments. His master regarded him as an inferior person, entrusted him with a small amount of money, and perhaps made him feel incompetent. It is very easy, immoral, and unchristian to discredit a person's ability and to make him timid and fearful. Jesus never made a person feel inferior, impotent, discouraged, resentful, or evasive. He rather inspired, encouraged, and emboldened people. He recognized and used the resources of a lad who had a few loaves and fishes, glorified the limited capacity of a foreign woman who fell down at his feet, and paid a superlative tribute to a financially impoverished widow. Some teachers, and even some churches, offer no inspiration to young men of humble birth; but in contrast Jesus never overlooked, disregarded, or discriminated against any person who came to him for help.

The man in the parable offered serious excuses for having failed to improve that which was entrusted to him. From some points of view his claims were sound. He said that his master was stern, arbitrary, exacting, and unfair. He thus described conditions of human life. Any observing person can list conditions that are severely discriminating. Nature frequently is merciless and cruel in the burdens it imposes, for it brings storms, pestilences, famine, prolonged torture, and death upon the innocent as well as upon the guilty. Millions of persons—the feeble-minded, a host of cripples, a majority of the blind, a large percentage of the sick, a vast number of the mentally



ill—had nothing to do with the circumstances that caused their affliction. Moreover, perhaps half of the human family suffer economic, social, educational, and moral handicaps simply because they were born into adverse situations. Many of them are so unfortunate that they have had no opportunity to develop a desire to seek better circumstances. Unscrupulous leaders and false ideologies have made millions of people the innocent victims of wars, and have doomed countless numbers to inaction, fear, and suffering.

Why was the poor man called an unprofitable servant and then cast out? If he was a victim of circumstances, why did he merit punishment? The answer is to be found in two facts which our Lord recognized and taught. First, man is a spiritual person, in some measure a free moral agent; and second, God is just. Every person capable of thinking is subject to the moral universe, and he is under obligation, to the extent of his ability, to undertake to do the right thing. It is a hard world, and a man must will to have dominion over it in some way and to some extent. The sin of the one-talent man was that he simply did not try. Natural law does not respect ignorance; moral law requires that a person, whatever his ability, do his best.

## 29

*Temptation*

And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness,

Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered.

And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread.

And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.

If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine.

And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence:

For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee:

And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.

—Luke 4:1-13

THE ARGUMENTS MADE BY AGENTS OF EVIL ARE OFTEN SERIOUS AND plausible. They include important facts, superior values, attractive reasons, distressing situations, grave needs, effective methods, valuable results, strong loyalties, and fine sentiments. Satan comes to every person as he approached Jesus, in an appropriate and convincing manner.

Jesus appreciated the material heritage, the needs, and the resources of his people. He was familiar with the vision and the labor of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the history of Egyptian bondage, and the long struggle of the Israelites in establishing their homes in Palestine. He felt that under his direction Palestine could enjoy physical prosperity excelling that of any other country. He could thus enable his people to have unusual physical comfort and economic security. The strength of this temptation becomes clear when we survey the achievements of modern science and technology. Such men as Galileo, Pasteur, Jenner, and Edison are honored and honorable, and their accomplishments are invaluable.

Our Lord also respected Israel's political heritage. He was proud of the statesmanship of Moses, Joshua, and David. He was

familiar with his country's contributions to law, literature, speculative thought, and religion. He saw his people in bondage to Rome, and he observed every type of political restriction and society inequity. What more important work could he do than that of freeing Israel from Rome, giving Israel a Magna Charta, establishing a condition of social justice, and then making his political ideology prevail throughout the world? As in our country the founding fathers attained lasting honor, so Jesus knew that by means of the political contribution he was able to make he could surpass Moses, Pericles, and Caesar, and thus gain the enduring homage of his people.

Official religious leadership offered enormous possibilities. The wealth of sacred literature, inspired codes, majestic prophecies, and hallowed tradition could be preserved, enlarged, and proclaimed to the world. A powerful religious leader could remove social burdens, inspire hope, and establish national unity and stability. Jesus realized that he had the personality, the intelligence, and the wisdom necessary to attract and lead every type of person. He could outthink the highest church officials, and he could draw the common people to him. Why should he not use his ability to build the most powerful official ecclesiastical organization imaginable? Why should he not establish a reputation and an authority surpassing those of Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Hosea? Why should he not issue official encyclicals decreeing moral thought and conduct for all times, places, and people, and thus direct the human family out of ways of error, inefficiency, and conflict?

Our Lord knew that materialistic achievement, however extensive and useful, is never an end within itself. We now

realize something of the rightness of the assertion that man cannot live by bread alone, for we know that man can destroy civilization by the use of atomic fission and bacteria. Jesus also understood that government must be used as a means only, and never as an end within itself. He understood that arbitrary political authority, international agreements, and high courts and leagues can never produce world brotherhood and justice. The Master realized, furthermore, that religious codes and organizations can never suffice, for the kingdom of God must grow and prevail in the human heart. He knew that above all physical accomplishments, political organizations, and religious groups, there must be awareness of God and consecration to him. He knew that his mission was that of revealing God, and he therefore could not compromise by devoting himself to a less important objective.

## 30

### *Distances*

And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane; and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray.

And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy;

And saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch.

And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him.

And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.

And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldest not thou watch one hour?

—Mark 14:32-37

DISTANCE—SPATIAL AND TEMPORAL—HAS BECOME AN INCREASINGLY fascinating subject. Physicists speak of the extent of interstellar space and of the speed of celestial bodies. Geologists measure strata and estimate geological eras. Rapid transportation and swift communication, it is said, have made the nations into one

small world. There are, however, other important types of measurement.

There are social, economic, political, and moral distances. One limited geographic area may embrace wealth and poverty, culture and ignorance, purity and contamination, security and fear. What is the distance between honesty and dishonesty, loyalty and betrayal, honor and dishonor, statesmanship and cleverness, love and hate, humility and arrogance, unselfishness and selfishness? Abraham and Lot stood together even at the altar, but Abraham looked toward the mountains while Lot faced Sodom. Our world is now small physically, but nations are centuries apart through fear, suspicion, and hate. The world must be measured in terms of the size of its moral problems and according to standards of ethical principles.

The gospel narrative gives an amazing case in point. The record states that Jesus went ahead, while the disciples followed. What was the distance, in vision, initiative, and courage, between the divine leader and the human follower?

Jesus knew what was going on about him. The agents of evil were gathered. Judas had betrayed him. Theological enemies had made plans to capture him, and their political forces were poised to strike. A murderous mob was forming. The crowd was prepared to clamor for his death and gloat over his suffering. What was the distance between Jesus and those instruments of evil?

Our Lord had to make a supreme decision. Should he quit his mission, compromise, and slip away into the security of oblivion? Or must he go to a cross and suffer bodily torture, mental anguish, and apparent infamy in order to establish ulti-

mate proof of his love and loyalty to God, to man, and to righteousness? The choice was one he himself had to make, for he had said of his life: "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." He fell upon his face, and in utter agony he suffered so intensely that he sweated drops of blood. A stone's throw away his disciples slept. What is the distance between him who suffered such anguish of soul and those who were unconcerned enough to seek forgetful sleep?

Not far away was Pilate, so low in moral stature that he would not support justice. What is the space between an official who in the interest of expediency evades duty, becomes party to an evil, and presumes to wash his hands of guilt and a man who accepts death on a cross rather than violate his divine mission?

Our Lord chose, as he had always done, to do the will of God. He arose and in complete serenity met his enemies, went to his trial, and with the majesty of God walked through the portals of death. How far from such divinity are betrayal, desertion, abuse, torture, mockery, murder?

A stone's throw? Some distances must be measured in terms of eternity.



# 31

## *Results of Worship*

The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.

Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.

But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

—John 4:19-24

DIVINE WORSHIP IS THE REVERENT ADORATION OF GOD. WHEN IT occurs, it is essentially an experience with God which effects personal transformation.

Worship starts a process of cleansing. When one realizes the presence of the Lord, he desires to rid himself of the impure,

the ugly, and the false; he yearns for the good, the beautiful, and the true; he wants his life to conform to the will of God. When Isaiah saw the Lord, he cried out: "Woe is me! . . . I am a man of unclean lips." When the centurion met Jesus, he said: "I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof." When Saul of Tarsus became aware of Christ, he was purged of the clogging impurities of arrogance, provincialism, and bigotry.

Worship also restores the soul with a corrected perspective of life. It enables us to see the secondary and the temporal in their proper setting and to look upon the real and the permanent with clearer vision and calmer security. For instance when Ezekiel saw "the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord," he did not gloat over his attainments, whine about his misfortunes, nor boast of Hebrew accomplishments. He fell upon his face in reverent adoration. When Job heard the eternal God say, "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?" he recognized the majesty and the glory of the Eternal. When Isaiah saw the Lord, high and lifted up, his soul resounded with the mighty, divine symphony: "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory."

Finally, worship brings to consciousness a sense of personal dignity. It makes one realize that he is a man and that he must play a man's role on the stage of God's world. It arouses a desire for enlarged vision, and it stirs one into action in the interest of righteousness. Worship makes one yearn to devote himself to some great and worthy enterprise, for it causes him to feel that he is a son of God.

Moses worshiped, and felt called to lead his people out of bondage. Isaiah worshiped, and said: "Here am I; send me."

Saul worshiped and then, despite torture and imminent death, proclaimed the gospel. And when we discover the Lord Christ—with his peerless wisdom, his matchless graciousness, his perfect justice, his unfailing compassion, his boundless love, and his unfaltering faith—we shall feel impelled to do his holy will.

*Have Dominion*

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

—Genesis 1:26-28

THE INSPIRED WRITER OF GENESIS STATES MAN'S UNIQUE NATURE and lofty responsibility. He affirms that God created man a spiritual person, placed him in a vast world, and charged him to have dominion over it. How does man exercise such sovereignty?

Man uses his authority in discovering natural resources and inventing channels of progress. He surveys atoms and stars, harnesses streams, charts the seas and the air, and draws upon rich stores of fuel, metals, and gems. He not only calls plant and

beast and fowl by name but also improves their stature and quality. He uses his divinely imparted privilege to lighten economic burdens, control diseases, increase insights, and substitute law for superstition.

Man gains dominion, moreover, of his own inner world as well as the world outside himself through the use of his capacity of appreciation. A person's mind enables him to observe facts, understand relations, evaluate situations, and form concepts. It permits him to enjoy the wealth of external sources of beauty—flowers with their delicate tints and subtle odors, gray hills and painted clouds and watchful stars, crags and glens and leaping streams, a thrush singing softly to her young, and the ineffable accent of a mother's voice. Through creative genius a Bach uses principles of harmony in producing immortal music; a Michelangelo perfects objects of art; a Homer sings matchless drama. Such human perception and aesthetic achievement are evidence of the mind's dominion over matter.

Man also gains dominion over the world through becoming aware of truth and personal worth. Unless a man exercises his capacity for moral insight and spiritual power, the mastery of things and the enjoyment of sensuous interests may make of him a hopeless slave.

The supreme goal of intelligence is the apprehension of reality. Mental impoverishment is a source of weakness; spiritual ignorance is the author of slavery. As Milton says:

He that has light within his own clear breast  
May sit i' the centre, and enjoy bright day:  
But he that hides a dark soul and foul thoughts

Benighted walks under the mid-day sun;  
Himself is his own dungeon.

The highest form of dominion is achieved through recognition of and reliance upon the truth. A wise person sees the world in the light of truth, and he consequently has confidence in his ability to interpret, to reflect, and to reshape the world about him with wisdom that transcends object, place, and time.

"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork" to him who has learned the language of their author. And a spiritually enlightened person understands, as did Paul, that out of the divine creative process, which involves long travail, come at last the sons of God.

*Seed and Harvest*

Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews:

And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,

Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.

And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.

But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people.

And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also;

Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to

the decrees of Cæsar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus.

And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things.

And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other, they let them go.

—Acts 17:1-9

ONE WHO PLANTS GOOD SEED WORKS IN HARMONY WITH NATURE'S productive forces. A person who sows great ideas conforms to high standards of mental growth. A man who teaches the truth labors in agreement with the principles of the moral universe. At Thessalonica, Paul sowed the seed of spiritual reality.

Paul therefore planted wisely. A sane farmer selects and uses the best available seed, for germination, growth, and harvest are inherent in the seed. In view of the harvest he hopes eventually to make, he chooses only plants of the finest strains. Paul planted the seed of the gospel. He knew that the gospel is Jesus Christ. Therefore, at Thessalonica he did not substitute Jewish law, religious ritual, current economic formulas, or any other subject for the gospel. He did what any wise preacher does; he preached the gospel—Jesus Christ himself.

Now planting involves problems. It requires effort, and the planter encounters obstacles. One who plants great ideas struggles with the baked soil of inertia, the infertile shale of indifference, the arid sand of empty sentiment, and the hard flint of prejudice. Moreover, he learns that the struggle for survival and growth occurs in the moral field as well as in the plant and



animal kingdoms, for opposition arises to a person who tries to substitute freedom for bondage. People cling to superstition, hold on to outmoded customs, and fight for vested interests. Mental inertia often restrains them; moral prejudice frequently obscures their vision; religious bigotry usually makes them intolerant and cruel. Such obstacles have hindered the progress of education, medicine, religion, and every other great enterprise. And, as was the case at Thessalonica, the enemies of truth and righteousness generally make their attacks by appealing to the crowd in the name of social security, racial prejudice, patriotism, and religion. Paul preached the gospel; prejudice flamed; a mob formed; innocent persons suffered; Paul was forced to leave the city.

But however weak or obscure or defeated it may appear at the time, the truth is strong, imperishable, and ultimately triumphant, while evil, however successful and powerful it may seem, is self-destructive. Paul had planted the seed of the truth. He had "reasoned with them out of the scriptures . . . that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ." He left Thessalonica in apparent defeat, but years later he found himself writing these words to a group of devout Christians at Thessalonica: "We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father." Paul therefore saw fruits of the seed he had planted at Thessalonica, and he was glad. If he could have observed the results of his labors as they appeared

in Europe and in the Americas during the next nineteen centuries—in art, literature, colleges and universities, churches, hospitals, orphanages, political rights, religious freedom, growing serious efforts to establish a world brotherhood, and, above all, human lives consecrated to Jesus Christ—his heart would have burst with joy.

One who plants the seed of truth in human hearts works with God, and one who works with God promotes the immortal.

## 34

### *Crisis and Greatness*

Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.

Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.

—John 12:27-28

SEVERE CRISES OFTEN REVEAL STRONG PERSONS AND EXPOSE WEAK ONES. By and large, human life includes exacting conflicts which test the fibers of character. In Gethsemane, Jesus successfully met a supreme crisis.

Gethsemane was a place of final decision. Jesus had worked hard and persistently. He had avoided any form of selfishness, decided against devotion to temporal power, and committed his life to God and to human needs. He had therefore helped the sick, the afflicted, the hopeless, the poor, the bereaved. Wherever he had gone, he had reflected the compassionate love of God and given inspiration, opportunity, joy, and hope. He had not relied upon wealth, armies, or official position for support; he rather depended upon love and goodness. Three and a half centuries earlier Plato had written that a man who was thus genuinely good would be

despised, misunderstood, abused, scourged, have his eyes burnt out, and be impaled. And now, in Gethsemane, Jesus faced such a climax. No man found a fault in him. He was so wise, so kind, so good, and so gracious that inferior, prejudiced men hated him. Evil forces were converging upon him. Judas had betrayed him; religious authorities had ordered armed men to arrest him; disciples were asleep; personal defeat and shameful agony seemed to be his lot. Such is often the situation when a good person meets the selfishness and the other cruel forces of the world. A thoughtful and devout person experiences some type of Gethsemane.

Under such existing circumstances Jesus did the natural thing. He prayed God for relief. We understand him better and love him more because he did that very thing. He enjoyed life; he was devoted to his family and his home; he appreciated his friends; he loved people; he wanted to continue to minister to those in need; he was so unselfish that he had no desire to become a martyr. Moreover, he knew the ugliness of prejudice, hate, cleverness, betrayal, and murder; and he understood the injustice that he would suffer. Why, therefore, should he—innocent, sinless, perfect in motive, grandly humanitarian, tireless in ministry to human need, the gospel of God incarnate—become a victim of a malicious leadership, of a heartless political regime, and of an ignorant mob? What was the sense and the fairness of it all? No wonder that he, in utter agony, prayed, "Father, save me from this hour."

In some fashion our hearts, at one time or another, cry out for relief. Why suffer physical affliction? Why bear heavy and unmerited burdens of anxiety, grief, shame, frustration? Why experience crippling invalidism, social injustice, excruciating pain,

premature death? Why devote one's life to unselfish efforts which, in turn, often provoke ingratitude, jealousy, criticism, and studied opposition? Why not, in some way, slip out of Gethsemane into the smooth current of popular opinion and public approval?

Our Lord elected to do the will of God. With a sense of divine mission and in genuine loyalty to honor, right, and righteousness, he could not compromise. He did not stoop to personal safety and comfort. A principle was in question. The forces of evil had converged; and for him it was either moral retreat or death, courage with honor or compromise with safety. He chose right and honor and courage, and he thus glorified both himself and God. And we, who in some measure understand him, love and respect him because he said to his Father, "Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done."

## 35

### *Conflict and Harmony*

No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

—Matthew 6:24-26

JESUS UNDERSTOOD THE PROBLEMS OF HUMAN LIFE. WITH AMAZING accuracy he anticipated modern diagnosis and treatment of types of mental illness arising from mental conflict and tension. In relation to this he said, "No man can serve two masters."

Mental illness is so prevalent that hospitals for psychopathic people are crowded, while many thousands of persons—only a small percentage of whom receive institutional treatment—suffer the milder types of mental derangement. It is also true that while organic disorders are a primary cause of mental disorders, a large number of cases of mental diseases and organic maladies

result from psychic tensions. Physicians and psychiatrists observe numerous cases of hypochondria, hysteria, anxiety, and despondency. Many such patients experience debility, localized pain or anesthesia, peptic ulcers, gastrointestinal convulsions, and ataxias. All these and many other maladies of the class designated as "functional" may be the result of chronic fears, exaggeration of problems, or persistent worry. Textbooks of abnormal psychology are filled with discussions of types of mental sickness resulting from conflict and the organic correlates of such infirmities.

With marvelous insight Jesus knew sources of such mental turmoil. In a brief figure of speech he attributed many of them to interests and objectives that are incompatible, antagonistic, and divisive. He knew the effects of domestic discord, social ambition, frustrated hopes, economic insecurity, violation of social conventions, and problems arising from certain types of religious beliefs. It is not difficult, for example, to discover persons who undertake to compensate for disappointment in love affairs, a failure in business, or a lack of social eminence; while so-called inferiority complexes are strikingly numerous, as reflected by the jealous person, the braggart and the bully, and the cringing individual—examples of which can be found in every community.

Our Lord specified methods of preventing and of curing such mental disorders. He never once intimated approval of the iniquitous claim that a person should follow only instinctive impulses, disregard fine social conventions, and grow up to have no inhibitions. He never suggested that a human life can rightly be committed to modes of sensuous gratification only. Rather, he constantly urged a comprehensive view of a person's nature and a high conception of values. In graphic hyperbole he said: "Take

no thought of what you shall eat and what you shall wear." He thus pointed out the primacy of mind over matter and of the spiritual over the temporal. Wealth, position, reputation, health, and comfort are not evil. But they themselves never guarantee happiness, for it is only when one recognizes that his life is based upon the eternal that he finds lasting satisfaction. And when he makes such a discovery, secondary interests fall into their proper place.

Jesus also showed the necessity of self-mastery. A person inevitably confronts people and problems, and in doing so needs such mental and moral discipline as will enable him to conduct himself with noble and manly bearing. If, like Epictetus and Spinoza, he realizes that he is divine, he is inspired and motivated by spiritual dignity that will not permit him to cringe when he meets persons of various social strata, intelligence, wealth, and power. Such a fine sense of respectability furnishes an inner tranquility which thwarts tensions arising from secondary human considerations. Jesus knew that he was the Son of God, and however arduous his burdens and harsh his enemies, he never lost his inner composure.

Our Lord revealed, too, the personal value of unqualified commitment to a great cause. No thoughtful person experiences peace when he is haunted by a suspicion that he is devoted to superficiality and that his life may therefore add up to mediocrity, for such belief brings tormenting division. But who thinks that a William Cary, a Matthew T. Yates, or a Wilfred Grenfell, whatever the hardships such a person may endure, could be torn asunder mentally? It is the playboy, the rootless misfit, the pampered and aimless social butterfly, the persistent egotistic seeker



after selfish objectives, who experience serious conflict. "If . . . thine eye be single," said our Lord, "thy whole body shall be full of light." There will be inner integrity.

Our Master moreover showed the integrating effect of sane belief in God. Such faith provides a goal and a safe anchorage whatever the furious storms that lash with enormous power. Let the superstructure become wrecked and washed away. What does that matter if one has committed his life to God? Jesus knew the Father and committed his life completely to him. When, therefore, all the things of the world seemed to collapse upon him, he was able to say, "I have overcome the world."

## 36

### *Gratitude and Ingratitude*

And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.

And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off:

And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.

And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God,

And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.

And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?

—Luke 17:11-17

GRATITUDE IS A CHRISTIAN VIRTUE. UNAFFECTED EXPRESSION OF thanks is evidence of nobility and refinement, while ingratitude is a symptom of depravity and crudeness. The story of the lepers reveals in sharp contrast two types of people.

The ten men were in dire need. They were victims of a loath-

some disease; they suffered the anguish associated with ostracism and hopelessness; they were outcasts and beggars. While these men represent people who experience extreme conditions of physical handicaps, of social tragedy, and of despair, it must be remembered that almost every person, whatever he himself or others think, is in a condition of grave need.

These men received help. They cried out for mercy, and Jesus healed their bodies. He provided relief from despair, restored them to their homes and their friends, and gave them hope and opportunity. They were therefore deeply indebted to their benefactor. Likewise, every member of a civilized society is indebted to those people, ancient and modern, honored and unknown, who, through their devotion and labor and sacrifices, have produced the present helpful features of civilization. We have, for example, great treasures of science and technology, of social mores, of fine arts, of literature and philosophy, and of religious truths; and we enjoy such treasures, which have helped to free us from the jungle's shackles of disease, labor, social enslavement, and superstition.

One of the lepers realized his indebtedness to Jesus and thanked him; nine of them accepted their cure as a matter of course and thus exposed their ill breeding. Such ingrates are the moral progenitors of one of our contemporaries, who presumed to make an estimate of the money, time, and energy wasted by our habit of saying "thank you." They are also akin to those people who, as recipients of numerous forms of aid, never thank their colleagues, their parents, or even God himself. It is such as they who accept the bounties of a community and do nothing for the community; who enjoy the protection and support of their

country and never do anything to promote good citizenship; who accept the benefits of Christian culture and ignore or deride the founder of Christianity. From such as they are bred parasites in time of peace and traitors in time of war. A person devoid of gratitude ignores friends, discourages kindness, and helps reduce the human family to the status of Frankenstein's monster—ungrateful for the gift of life itself. Ingratitude is not only degenerative; it is also the most inexcusable sin in the world. Jesus healed the bodies of the nine lepers, but their ulcerous hearts remained untouched, for in some respects their attitude was worse than that of the brutes.

The grateful man obeyed the impulse of a generous and appreciative spirit. His fine sense of decency and honor caused him to come to the Master and say, "I thank you." Then the Master made this revealing statement to him: "Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole."

*Mission and Strategy*

Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves:  
be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the  
councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues;

And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for  
my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.

—Matthew 10:16-18

THE REVELATION OF THE INNER SECRET OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD stimulates our urge to change the world. In one terse sentence our Lord enjoined three responsibilities upon strategists of Christian social change.

A Christian has a mission. Jesus said to his disciples, "I send you forth." A primary criterion of the Christian way is the desire to do something worth while. Our Master expected interest, action, and fruitfulness. He required sane, undivided, and constructive loyalty. He inspired a person to try to rise from contamination to purity, from ignorance to wisdom, from injustice to justice, from matters of minor value to affairs of major significance. Jesus loved God and people so intensely and wisely that whether he dealt with a teacher, a doctor, a fisherman, a

taxgatherer, a housekeeper, or a beggar, he called that person to high levels of personal excellence and usefulness.

The Christian encounters dangers. Evil people surrounded our Lord, hated him, slandered him, tortured and killed him, and then tried to destroy the kingdom that he established. He thus knew those people who, like ravenous wolves, are eager to stalk, attack, maim, and kill. He was aware of the dangers a man encounters when he publishes facts, exposes evils, urges moral excellence, and proclaims living truth in place of established tradition. He knew that ignorance, prejudice, selfishness, and vested interests spurn, abuse, and attempt to destroy wisdom, tolerance, and benevolent effort. We ourselves know that even a casual review of the history of medical science, astronomy, and mental illness discloses innumerable efforts—many of them in the name of the Lord himself—to fight progress in order to preserve the *status quo*. It appears that no great cultural undertaking or wholesome religious movement escapes the attacks of ravenous enemies.

Our Master also specified the nature of Christian strategy. He said that his disciples must be as wise as serpents, thus warning that a Christian must be adequately informed, constantly alert, and fully capable of meeting and successfully attacking any enemy of righteousness. In view of the present dangers arising from indifference, faithlessness, and national ambition implemented with weapons capable of effecting the suicide of civilization, it is inescapably true that a Christian leader is expected to become the best informed, the most highly skilled, and the wisest person. Jesus himself was thus prepared. He met every type of existing situation, but no problem baffled him; no trickster fooled him; no traditionalist blinded him; no subversive agency made a

tool of him; no pomp awed him; and no authority intimidated him. He never sheathed his two-edged sword of intellect and spirit at the threat of a Herod or the command of a Pharisee.

Jesus furthermore said that a Christian must be as harmless as a dove. He thus indicated that a Christian's character must be unblemished, his motives pure, his methods fair, his standards honorable. Our Master himself was the paragon of ethical excellence and of sound judgment. At times he became violently angry, used language that was searing, and expressed unequivocal condemnation; but no person could honestly question his deep sympathy, his boundless love, his profound compassion, and his tender mercy. It was evil, and not persons, that he fought.

The truth never stoops; it is never vindictive; it never retaliates with evil. Our Lord is the perfect embodiment of the spiritual reality which redeems human lives.

## 38

### *Religion and Common Sense*

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls:

Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

—Matthew 13:45-46

THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION AT ITS BEST STRESSES COMMON sense, the exercise of which is evidence of sound character. Our Lord constantly taught good judgment, and chided men for foolishness more severely than he did for the grosser sins. In the parable of the merchant he states some of the common-sense essentials of Christian growth.

First, the merchant was alert. He used his resources of energy, vision, time, and opportunity. Jesus thus taught the importance of initiative and observation. Our Lord never calls a careless, shiftless, indolent person to an important task, for the very nature of the kingdom of God requires life, industry, and determination at their best. Furthermore, he never asks a person to do a foolish thing.

The merchant also had a superior sense of values. He did not devote himself to the trivial and worthless; he searched for pearls,



and he knew a good pearl when he saw one. One of the greatest sources of waste is the lack of discerning insight; a major tragedy is the foolishness of casting one's pearls before unworthy objects of devotion. Plato says that those "who know not wisdom and virtue . . . are always busy with gluttony and sensuality. . . . Like cattle, with their eyes always looking down, . . . they kill one another by reason of their insatiable lusts." We recognize the need of good judgment in law, engineering, and medicine; we require clear discrimination in the fine arts; we must insist upon intelligent discernment of the treasures of the spiritual realm.

The merchant, furthermore, was a man of action. He had the courage to act upon his insight and to make an all-out investment. When he found the matchless pearl, he consolidated all of his resources and bought it. He recognized the best; he craved the best; he got the best. Inaction in view of opportunity is a symptom of inferior character. Contentment with mediocrity reveals a fear of responsibility and leads to moral stagnation and regression. When one has heard Paderewski and Kreisler and read Plato and Homer, he thereafter seeks men of giant stature. When we discover Christ our Lord, we would fain call him Master.

## 39

### *Truth and Freedom*

Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.

And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.

As he spake these words, many believed on him.

Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then ye are my disciples indeed;

And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

—John 8:28-32

FREEDOM IS A POSITIVE ATTITUDE, A SENSE OF INDEPENDENCE DERIVED from faith in God. It is a result of the discovery of moral autonomy before God and the disciplined squaring of life with reality.

Man usually seeks freedom through use of his own ingenuity. But freedom within the limitation of human devices alone is as illusory as the dawn of the morning and as destructive as death itself. For example, the sophistry that might makes right results in economic coercion, reliance on physical prowess, and government by totalitarian agencies. The assumption that Utopia would

arise from science led to the theft of atomic fire and threatens to arouse the gods of destruction to unparalleled fury. No serious person believes, as did the Nazis, that the legalistic sophistries of men or the enterprising cunning of power politics produces freedom. The doctrine that the substance of truth is transient and relative lowers man to the status of a rationalizing brute and deletes God from the universe.

Such ideologies, which rest upon the assumption that life has no sanction except human cleverness, cause the vital spirit of man to degenerate into beggary. They permit the flaunting of economic laws and delegated authority; they necessitate international war; and they tempt many religious organizations to devote themselves unduly to vested interests of property, dogmas, and priestly authority.

Our Lord never intimated that genuine freedom consists of the absence of restraints, that freedom can be derived from material and political resources, or that it is a product of human ingenuity. He never assumed that man's puny imagination laid the foundations of the universe, caused the morning stars to sing together, established ethical principles, or sustained the everlasting arms. He proclaimed three foundational truths that are essential to the achievement of freedom—the eternal God, the immortality of human personality, and the moral law.

Jesus knew that only God provides the valid explanation of the universe and gives a person unique meaning and enduring hope. He also knew that the nature of God and the structure of humanity do proclaim the moral law. He was therefore aware that human freedom is grounded in the character of God and in the fellowship of those who practice the ruling sense of his

presence. The spirit of freedom is born when a person realizes that he is a son of God, dedicates himself to righteousness, and becomes captive to the divine. That is one reason why Jesus said: "If ye continue in my word . . . ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

## 40

### *The Candle*

No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed; but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light.

For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither any thing hid, that shall not be known and come abroad.

Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.

—Luke 8:16-18

OUR LORD USED A CANDLE AS A PLAIN ILLUSTRATION OF THE NATURE and function of a human life.

The candle represents latent power. It thus embodies chemical elements, time, natural law, residues of life, and human design. Likewise a human life contains the substance of stars and atoms; it embraces marvelous types of organic pattern; it possesses the mental capacity necessary to have dominion over the earth; and it has that divine endowment essential to spiritual insights.

The candle also symbolizes energy. The lighted candle transforms latent power into dynamic force. As the electric light depends upon cables, dynamos, streams, rainfall, gravitation, and

the sun itself, so the flame of the candle involves energy related to physical substance, the laws of nature, and the very source of life and power. The proper function of the candle is light—light used in the interest of comfort, industry, progress, safety, and beauty. Jesus thus reveals the comprehensiveness of a human life, the transforming influence of an active personality, and the significance of a man as related to God and God's divine order.

Our Lord declared furthermore that only sane use should be made of a candle. No wise man lights a candle and puts it under a vessel that cuts off the supply of oxygen, extinguishes the flame, and produces foul odor. Only a fool places a lighted candle under a bed, where it is both useless and dangerous. One rather sets a candle in an elevated receptacle, where its light dispels darkness, clarifies objects, provides safety, and reveals beauty.

Just so, no enlightened person is supposed to waste and stifle his capacities. He does not suffocate himself with slothfulness, intemperance, and ignorance; he does not become an agent of social uselessness, moral offensiveness, and ethical darkness; he does not restrict himself with impotent inaction, blinding prejudice, and destructive selfishness. A wise man, to the best of his ability, uses his endowment of body, mind, and spirit in harmony with God's holy will, through the discovery and the revelation of truth, and for the glory of God.

# 41

## *The Spirit of Truth*

I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

—John 16:12-13

OUR LORD STATES THAT THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH IS A GUIDE INTO ALL truth. What is this guide? In view of persons we have known who were led by the spirit of truth, it is not difficult to designate characteristics of this divine spirit.

The spirit of truth is intellectual honesty, for it requires complete sincerity of motive, recognizes facts, and respects valid inferences. It is the high courage that combats ignorance and misrepresentation and leads us to dare to explore wherever manifestations of truth can be found. It is the idealistic inspiration that encourages persistent effort and demands the highest in professional skill and moral excellence of which a person is capable. It is the altruism that enables us to rejoice at the appearance of a person genuinely superior to ourselves, to be glad when real progress occurs, and to be happy to learn that another

person's fine accomplishments surpass and even supersede our own achievements.

Again, the spirit of truth is sacrificial good will. It is the selfless determination which causes one to lose himself in commitment to some great humanitarian objective. It leads scientists to jeopardize their lives in the study of diseases, makes Albert Schweitzer minister to bodies and souls in an African jungle, and caused a soldier friend of mine to go far beyond the line of duty and risk his life to bring in wounded and dead comrades.

The spirit of truth, moreover, is a motivation to progress. It requires the pursuit of facts, wisdom of interpretation, and development and use of the skills that enabled man to move from the jungle to civilization. Astronomers enlarge our stellar horizons. Men in the fields of economics, business, and statesmanship wrestle with local and international problems. Psychologists probe the human mind in effort to discover its nature and to find means of relief from mental infection and illness. Furthermore, the spirit of truth motivates the best in art, literature, music, and other areas of aesthetic culture.

Finally, the spirit of truth has fostered pioneer missionary zeal. It impels men and women to carry the gospel to every area of the world. From Paul to the present time it has endeavored to establish peace and good will among all people, and to give the human family a Magna Charta of freedom and righteousness.



*Jesus and Intelligence*

And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.

And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.

And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.

And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.

And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

—Luke 2:46-52

MORE THAN ANY OTHER PERSON JESUS EMPHASIZED INTELLIGENCE. He is a clear illustration of how divine truth manifests itself through the medium of human personality.

No one can successfully disclaim the Master's store of general information or discredit the manner in which he used such knowledge. He spoke fluently of seasons, storms, floods, and sunsets. He was familiar with soil, seed, trees, flowers, and fruits. He understood planting, germination, cultivation, harvesting, and preservation; and he knew birds, sheep, cattle, donkeys, camels, and swine, and used them to illustrate great truths. Moreover, Jesus was acquainted with the manual arts and essentials of architecture, for he spoke of the yoke, the builder's stone, and the nature of foundations. He was aware of personal affairs and domestic situations, for he mentioned children's games, conditions of poverty and wealth, and existing discrimination against women. He also knew the worth, the power, and the dangers of government; he was familiar with religious organizations, knew their value, and exposed their arbitrary authority.

Jesus was a student. He learned invaluable lessons in his home, from his devout mother, and in the synagogues. At twelve years of age he was an alert student whose wisdom astonished the great teachers in the temple. At the outset of his ministry he was at home in any contemporary field of thought. He knew the Scriptures, quoted them freely, and interpreted them wisely. He easily summarized the Hebrew law, and stated its value and its limitations. He stressed the dangers of ignorance and revealed the merits of wisdom, for he knew that ignorance, whatever its form, is perilous and that information, good judgment, and wisdom are essential to righteousness. When we read the illustration of the builder who first counted the cost; examine the account of the houses, the one erected upon sand and the other upon a

rock; study the parable of the talents; analyze the story of the planter who sent his soul to live in his barns; and consider the account of the prodigal son, we discover that Jesus consistently exalted wisdom and condemned ignorance.

Jesus also had a correct sense of values. He never mistook the trivial for the important, the temporary for the permanent, or the artificial for the genuine. Although he never discredited practical affairs, he knew the divine nature and the infinite value of a human life; therefore he placed primary emphasis upon moral purity, ethical excellence, and spiritual maturity.

Furthermore, Jesus was the embodiment of gentility. He moved with princely grace in every stratum of society in which he found himself. Whether he was with the ignorant or the scholarly, the poor or the wealthy, peasant or king, one person or a multitude, he was completely serene. Whether he was the honored guest of a home or with a teacher in the temple, welcomed or threatened, applauded or mocked, he was full of graciousness. He never did anything that was crude, unkind, or dishonorable. Our Master possessed commanding dignity, unaffected refinement, keen sensitivity, inspiring magnetism, uncompromising firmness, and divine humility. He was so gentle that children trusted him, yet he was so austere as to drive irreverent mercenaries from the temple. He did not embarrass a woman, use a woman as an example of evil, or otherwise reflect unfavorably upon her; yet his words flashed like a rapier when directed at hypocrites. With burning sarcasm he called Herod a fox, yet he uttered no word of reproof to Roman soldiers who, in line of duty, tortured him. With righteous indignation he called Pharisees blind guides and

whited sepulchers, but he was so sympathetic that he wept with a bereaved family. He appreciated lilies and birds and sunsets. He immortalized generosity and thoughtfulness and gratitude. He was the wisest, the justest, the kindest, and the best person who ever lived.

## 43

### *Jesus and Courage*

Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom:

And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven.

But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake.

And it shall turn to you for a testimony.

Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer:

For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.

And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death.

And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake.

But there shall not an hair of your head perish.

In your patience possess ye your souls.

—Luke 21:10-19

IN SPEAKING OF MORTAL PERIL A GREAT ATHENIAN SAID: "I CARED NOT a straw for death. . . . My great and only care was lest I should do an unrighteous or unholy thing." As Socrates thus suggests, moral heroism is one of life's finest attributes. Spiritual fortitude is a primary Christian virtue, one which Jesus reflected perfectly.

Jesus courageously met grim conditions of life. During his infancy a jealous and merciless king sought to kill him. He grew up amid the serious and exacting problems of a widowed mother's home and shared the grave responsibilities of the family. He was torn between a sense of divine mission and duty to his mother and his brothers and sisters. He saw the halt, the maimed, the blind, the leprous, the epileptic, and the demoniacal. He observed the publican, the priest, the thief, the harlot, and the hypocrite. He not only knew friends, bold patriots, and devout persons but was also familiar with political despots, religious autocrats, and cold extortioners. Jesus boldly and realistically confronted every type of hardship, suffering, inequity, and discrimination; and he had no fear of facts, nor any inclination to evade human situations.

Our Lord also had the courage to undertake a great mission. He knew human life; he understood the value of a human soul; he was aware of God's goodness, love, and mercy; and whatever the cost, he resolved to do the Father's will. Consequently he turned from his seemingly more immediate duty to his mother and pointed out evils in places high and low, exposed selfishness, arrogance, envy, bigotry, bureaucracy in government and in religion, and sharply contrasted strict adherence to tradition with God's mercy and compassion. Jesus went about doing good wherever he found any person who sought his help. He never quibbled about the cause of an affliction and never vied with an-

other for reputation or temporal power. Our Lord healed the leper, restored sight to the blind, brought joy to the sorrowful, and gave hope to those in despair. For him one act of compassion was worth more than all of the ecclesiastical parade in relieving human suffering and frustration. His meat was to do God's will; and throughout his ministry he never exhibited timidity, never faltered with respect to the course he chose to follow, never evaded a vital issue, never violated a principle of righteousness.

For such a gloriously courageous way of life Jesus paid heavily in the coin of suffering. He gave up his home. His family misunderstood him. His neighbors tried to kill him. Herod, under the influence of an unscrupulous wife and her silly daughter, beheaded his great friend. Clever men constantly undertook to trick him and destroy his influence. Fickle public opinion applauded him at one moment and then clamored for his death. One of his disciples betrayed him; three of them went to sleep during the time of his agony at Gethsemane; one of them, at the taunt of a servant girl, profanely denied knowing him; and all of them deserted him in the hour of danger. He defied prejudice in his efforts to heal the sick, to remove ignorance, and to eliminate bigotry. He endured slanderous tongues, felt the sting of the lash, heard insulting mockery. He knew that hate would kill him if he taught the truth. He nevertheless spoke the truth; and prejudice, supported by ignorance, did kill him. But he died so nobly courageous that a Roman officer recognized his divinity.

## *Jesus and Humility*

The same came therefore to Philip, which was to Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.

Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus.

And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.

—John 12:21-26

HUMILITY IS A CHRISTIAN VIRTUE. A HUMBLE PERSON WISELY estimates himself in relation to supreme values and devotions, and he consequently avoids haughtiness, arrogance, and vainglory. Jesus met pride and conquered it with humility.

One day certain Greeks came to see Jesus. He appears to have



experienced joy upon learning that representatives of a distant country, the most cultured area of the world, desired to see him. There was adequate cause for him to glory in such distinction. His reputation now extended beyond Palestine; his brilliance had attracted the peers of speculative thought. Athena's spear not only guided mariners; it also illuminated the deep resources of the intellect. Those Greeks were of the land of Pericles, Thucydides, and Demosthenes; of Homer, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Aristophanes; of Phidias and Ictinus; of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. It was a great honor to be sought out by the Greeks, who had no equals in architecture, art, literature, and philosophy.

Jesus then did an astounding thing—one which in an amazing manner reveals his incredible sense of values, his perfect motivations, and his absolutely unselfish purpose. When pride in reputation as such began to arise, he completely suppressed the inclination and uttered these trenchant and truthful words: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." He thus refused to compromise his divine mission by permitting any type or measure of selfish motive to mar his life and work. The record does not show that he saw the Greeks.

Our Lord knew that vanity is morally prohibitive, degenerative, and corruptive. He hurled caustic invective against proud individuals. He had no patience with men who were dogmatic, who wore long faces, who paraded their piety, or who sought to attract attention to themselves in the synagogue or elsewhere. A cardinal sin of the present time is conceit, the means whereby men

become nothing by thinking more highly of themselves than they ought to think. When a man boasts of his genius, proclaims his achievements, seeks applause, or feels "deep satisfaction" at the progress he has made, he would do well to survey existing chaos and imminent dangers, contrast his puny opinions with timeless truth, and reflect upon the humility of Jesus Christ.

## *Jesus and Righteousness*

Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

—Matthew 6:31-33

RIGHTEOUSNESS IS THE SPIRIT AND PRACTICE OF RIGHT LIVING. IT IS intelligent devotion to that which is truthful, honorable, and constructive. It is essentially co-operation with God in the preservation and enhancement of moral worth and spiritual value. The attainment of righteousness demands the appreciation and adoption of certain prerequisite conditions.

Righteousness requires hard work. Jesus worked. He selected as disciples men who were at work. In the story of the talents and in the description of the last judgment he plainly showed that the inactive and the indifferent, who waste their ability and opportunity, will suffer outer darkness. There is no place in Christ's kingdom for careless attitudes, limp minds, and lazy bones.

Righteousness also embraces intelligent desire to improve human life. Any person who helps raise the level of human life, through any honorable method of bringing relief or of enabling people to find mental and spiritual freedom, is working with God. Some of us have observed a life unfold in the warm glow of truth. Some of us have felt an inner joy when we helped restore health to a sick body or sanity to an afflicted mind; for when we work with God in promoting the abundant life, such ministry touches the console of the heart and produces ineffable harmony.

Righteousness, moreover, presupposes purity of motive, reverence for that which is higher than ourselves, and loyalty to a great cause. In this connection Jesus pointed out those who obeyed the letter of the law and robbed widows, the arrogant publican, and the self-righteous Simon as concrete illustrations of those whose hearts were impervious to righteousness. And in contrast to them he brought into sharp relief the humble centurion, the penitent Zacchaeus, and the poor widow.

Any person whose work is characterized by a ruling sense of the presence of Christ meets the conditions of righteous living. Some time ago I entered the office of a prominent lawyer as a widow was leaving. The lawyer told me that he was trying to save the woman's estate. He turned to a picture on the wall and said: "That is the pattern to which I try to fit my life." It was a picture of the Good Samaritan. Then his face glowed as he turned to another picture and said: "He is the cause." It was a picture of Christ.

## *Power and the Gospel*

I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.

So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

—Romans 1:14-16

PAUL STATES THREE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GOSPEL. HE SAYS THAT the gospel is power. Physical power, locked in material substance or released, excites wonder. Life, in amoeba or in man, produces amazement. The penetrative and inventive genius of the human mind, exploring atoms and stars, acquiring information, forming concepts, expressing affection, and implementing faith, arouses astonishment. Paul suggests that Jesus Christ is an incomparable reservoir of spiritual energy.

Paul states that the gospel is unique power. He realized that Jesus Christ is the gospel. He became aware of the fact that when the angel said to the shepherds, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people," he was proclaiming Jesus, the Christ, the power of whose love would enchant the

minds and transform the souls of men. Physical power operates in the realm of the material world; political power manifests itself in government; ecclesiastical power appears in religious organizations. But spiritual power occurs in the domain of the spirit, and its unique nature transforms human interests and motives.

The apostle not only proclaimed the gospel as power and as the power of God; he said also that it is the power of God unto salvation. Freedom is achieved through conformity to reality. Escape from physical burdens is gained by the proper knowledge and use of natural phenomena and laws. We remove diseases of body and mind through the observance of the essentials of health and mental growth. Spiritual freedom is likewise achieved through conformity to the truth. Only the truth can free a man of the sin he commits against the truth. Moreover, we talk about freedom from want and fear and the freedom to think and to worship; but we should think of free men, of the source of freedom, and of the fact that free men are dependent upon devotion to spiritual truth and conformity to it. They are freed from bondage to lesser loyalties by their servanthood to the greater loyalty to Christ.

Paul knew how Christ's power gives freedom; for when Paul met Christ, he escaped from pharisaical fanaticism into unselfish love; from enslavement to tradition into exhilarating loyalty to living reality; from the exacting shackles of rules of conduct into invigorating commitment to vital principles; and from Hebrew arrogance into the joy of citizenship in the kingdom of God.

## *The Cross and a Divine Mission*

From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.

But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

—Matthew 16:21-23

THE CROSS IS OUR MOST IMPORTANT RELIGIOUS SYMBOL. NO MAN CAN fully comprehend its meaning. Jesus alone clearly understood its profound significance.

For our Lord the Cross represented full commitment to a supreme mission. He realized that the mission required adequate equipment, and so he spent long years of serious study in acquiring facts and in developing knowledge. He was aware that intellectual honesty is an essential of integrity, and he therefore kept every window of his alert mind wide open to the truth and proper inferences of the truth. He understood that wisdom is a prerequisite to righteousness and freedom; so he observed exist-

ing conditions, reflected upon ancient codes and ideas, toughened his mental fiber with sane appreciation of human situations of every type, and developed insights and judgments that were clear, comprehensive, and faultless. The apex of wisdom is awareness of the Eternal, and the acquisition of such wisdom entails heavy personal obligations. Jesus acquired the highest mode of wisdom, and as a result of his knowledge of truth he was impelled to devote himself unreservedly to a positive ministry to human need.

Now when a person thinks, he suffers; for recognition of human error, strife, waste, and misery inevitably causes pain. When a man commits himself to social and religious advancement, he invites condemnation; for all too often people having vested interests of money, reputation, and authority bitterly oppose him. It is a persistent, tragic fact that self-righteous guardians of the *status quo* with one hand furnish weapons for destroying contemporary prophets, while with the other hand they solicit funds with which to erect monuments to ancient martyrs. As one recalls Athenians who made the city immortal, pioneers in modern science, and men who fought for religious freedom, he observes a vast pantheon filled with men who were handicapped, persecuted, and killed by reactionists.

Our Lord knew people, and he was aware of the discouraging conditions, the critical situations, and the murderous plots he would experience. He nevertheless devoted himself completely to the will of God. He was driven out of his home synagogue. He worked hard in teaching his disciples, who at times seemed to refuse to learn. He heard slanderous innuendoes concerning his parentage. He was accused of madness and blasphemy, and religious authorities said that he was in league with the devil. Our



Lord thus bore heavy burdens of misunderstanding, ingratitude, jealousy, threats, ostracism, and loneliness along a road which, he knew, led to an utterly unjust and untimely death. But he chose that way because his deep sense of mission permitted him no other course.

When Simon Peter tried to persuade Jesus not to go to Jerusalem, where he would encounter peril, our Lord said to him: "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offense unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."

*The Cross and Integrity*

And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified.

And the soldiers led him away into the hall, called Prætorium; and they called together the whole band.

And they clothed him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his head.

And began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews!

And they smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing their knees worshipped him.

And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him.

—Mark 15:15-20

WHEN HE COULD HAVE SAVED HIS LIFE BY COMPROMISE OF HIS MISSION as a teacher, Socrates said to those about to condemn him: "Men of Athens, I honor and love you; but I shall obey God rather than you, and while I have life and strength I shall never cease from the practice and teaching of philosophy." This man, who felt himself called of God to teach, thus refused to discredit his

integrity or his mission; for his high conception of God, of himself, and of his work would not permit him to stoop.

A man's character conforms to his conception of himself and to the objects of his devotions. A person's loyalty is grounded therefore in the God he worships and the values he respects. At the present time secularism discredits faith, opportunism obscures permanent values, sensuous hedonism clouds ethical principles, and expediency veils spiritual reality. In recent years, consequently, vast numbers of people have bartered their souls in exchange for promises of quick success, power, ease, and personal security. But the willful violation of personal integrity and loyalty to truth—wherever and however such compromise occurs—is a cardinal, degenerating, contagious evil.

For Jesus the Cross meant absolute refusal to compromise his divinity or discredit his sacred mission. He never once abused his faith, his purity, his purpose, or his work. He accepted obligations that required hard labor; he spoke the truth despite imminent danger; he healed the infirm regardless of inevitable antagonism; he exposed evils in view of certain condemnation. Our Master never weakened before appeals to accept political authority, never stooped before an applauding crowd, never cringed before a theological hierarchy, never quailed before political despots, never whimpered in the presence of pain and death.

How different our Lord was from others! In evasion of responsibility Pilate washed his weak hands. With sublime dignity Jesus said to Pilate: "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world." Simon Peter fearfully swore that he never knew Jesus. Our Lord looked upon the poor, confused disciple with melting affection and redeeming tenderness. A murderous,

saturnalian mob shouted: "Crucify him, crucify him." Jesus prayed: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Taunting, jealous, vindictive, fanatical priests walked about the cross, wagged their silly heads, and, mocking him, said: "Save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." Jesus said: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

Jesus remained on the cross. He had divine self-respect; he was about his Father's kingly business; and he would therefore not use a selfish means or a spectacular method to establish his divinity or to reveal God's love and mercy.

## 49

### *The Cross and Love*

He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.

He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

—Matthew 10:37-39

THE WORLD IS FULL OF CONFUSION, DEPRESSION, AND FRUSTRATION. It suffers bankruptcy of ideals and impoverishment of faith. There is no way out except that of the Cross.

For our Lord the Cross meant impelling, sacrificial love. Jesus, of course, knew and honored filial devotion; he so respected Joseph that he consistently referred to God as a kind, loving, and gracious Father, and he was as deeply devoted to his mother as only the oldest son of a widowed mother can be. He never failed to respond to a plea made by a father or a mother in behalf of some member of the household. Jesus also appreciated and exalted friendship. He never disregarded or deserted a friend. He respected and paid high tribute to John the Baptist, heard the plea of the centurion in behalf of his servant, healed the afflicted boy

at the foot of the mountain, and restored the health of the man brought to him by friends.

But our Master possessed a love that transcended any temporal interest. It was unaffected and intelligent devotion to a great cause and priceless values. It was appreciation of right, honor, justice, beauty, and goodness. It was attachment to magnetic truth, to reality that drew him beyond secondary affairs and caused him to refuse to yield to fatigue, hunger, danger, safety, or promises of political prestige and ecclesiastical authority. The love that our Lord knew enabled him to say: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." And throughout his ministry, whatever situation he discovered, however steep and tortuous his road, he never violated the platform which he proclaimed.

Jesus found the pattern of his life, and made the boundaries of his earthly kingdom of the substance of sacrificial love. He was therefore able to transform men and women. He changed humble fishermen into great leaders, converted taxgatherers into staunch disciples and honorable citizens, and healed the ill of body and of mind. He removed despair arising from moral and social maladjustment. When Paul became dominated by the love of Christ, he was so reoriented by inner transformation of values and ideals that, repudiating his pride in Roman citizenship, Hebrew ancestry, scholarship, and ecclesiastical prominence and renouncing his fanatical devotion to Mosaic authority, he accepted

instead the lash, chains, ostracism, and the headsman's axe; and he regarded it an honor and a joy to make the exchange.

Jesus learned, through foresight and bitter experience, that open expression of such deep sympathy, constructive love, and good will would cause many people to hate him. He realized that intolerant authorities would judge him in terms of their own provincial, prejudiced, intolerant natures. He knew that he would make enemies who would kill him if he exposed ignorance and hypocrisy. He was so good that he had no desire to become a martyr; he suffered bitter agony in Gethsemane; he endured insults from persons of little minds and smaller souls. But he chose to pay the awful price of severe torture, apparent shame, and gross injustice; and in doing so he made the Cross the symbol of God's boundless love.

## 50

### *The Cross and Triumph*

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering.

—Hebrews 2:9-10

WHY SHOULD A PERSON CHOOSE DELIBERATELY A WAY OF LIFE THAT requires hard labor, exact training, the denial of personal comforts, and the humiliation of public condemnation? Is it reasonable that one should strive to help unfortunate people who are indifferent and ungrateful, work in psychopathic hospitals, minister in a leper colony, or spend one's life with people in slums, torrid jungles, and arctic wastes?

There are numerous people who feel that the objects of human ministry are not worthy of such sacrifices and that the objects of faith—whether God, man, or moral law—are the ephemeral vapors of empty sentimentality. For them religion is a myth having value only as an escapism, a mental opiate, or a means of



social control. The religious skeptic insists that logic, science, and history as such never prove the existence of the human soul, immortality, God, or the ultimate triumph of truth. For science has not isolated and described the soul, no logic has demonstrated immortality, and no person has produced a formula by which he could prove the existence of God.

Nevertheless, for Jesus there was only one course he was able to follow. For him the Cross meant faith in the reality and goodness of God, and for him the Cross was an acid test of that superlative conviction. From the point of view of temporal values our Lord chose an unwise course. He largely disregarded existing standards of greatness and of effective influence; he permitted himself to become the victim of unscrupulous men, when he could have escaped them and the injustice they imposed upon him. In the end his work appeared to be leading toward inglorious failure.

For our Lord was on a cross, dying between two criminals. He had devoted his ministry to the unfortunate; and now, typical of the reception his life had met, one thief mocked him and the other sought a blessing; bigoted enemies were crucifying him and a few kind friends stood near. It seemed that his death was shameful, his work a failure, his future oblivion. But his complete devotion to the truth, his unqualified love for people, his immaculate character, and his deep compassion made him pray for those whose ignorance and hate were killing him. Our Saviour was aware that life is not a mockery of fate; that men are not "tormented atoms in a bed of mud"; that hope is not a momentary, delusive glow in a vast night. Jesus knew God, and he

therefore realized that goodness is imperishable reality, which all the vast forces of evil cannot destroy.

So at the Cross, as evil attacked good, impurity surrounded purity, injustice assaulted right, ignorance mocked wisdom, despair enshrouded hope, and death enveloped life, our blessed Lord, with supreme confidence, committed his spirit unto God.





















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